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THE HOLY SPIRIT

OR

POWER FROM ON HIGH

AN UNFOLDING OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

By

REV. A. B. SIMPSON, D.D.

PART I. THE OLD TESTAMENT

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NEW EDITION FROM NEW PLATES

WITH FOREWORD BY

WALTER M. TURNBULL, D.D.

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FOREWORD

Among the many treatises upon the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, these two volumes from the pen of Dr. A. B. Simpson have won a unique and commanding place. Lucidity of style, comprehensiveness of treatment, and spirituality of message are the marked characteristics of these, as of all the works of this gifted writer. Profound students of Scripture and a host of beginners in the faith have alike been helped by their rich spiritual instruction. Just as his great series, "Christ in the Bible," opens the Scriptures to reveal Jesus upon every page, so this great exposition, "The Holy Spirit; or, Power from on High," leads the reader to recognize the Holy Spirit in the types, symbols, and prophecies of the Old Testament, and in the promises, records, and revelation of the New Testament. This monumental work should be in the library of every worker who covets a spiritual ministry, and should be prayerfully perused by every Christian who longs for a life of victory. Its pages will repeatedly convict, inspire, and refresh.

The chapters of these books were originally given as burning messages from the Gospel Tabernacle pulpit in New York and were designed to lead the members of the congregation into the personal experience of the truth set forth. Sunday after Sunday Dr. Simpson poured out his heart in Scriptural teaching and earnest exhortation, aiming constantly to lead his auditors to definite acceptance of the fullness of the Spirit. His own life flamed with the reality of the message his lips proclaimed. These volumes, therefore, are the vials containing the essence of Dr. Simpson's deepest ministry. Because of the nature of their preparation, there is in

these pages a pungence that penetrates the soul and a power that strangely moves the spirit.

Readers of these and other books of Dr. Simpson will readily understand the constant increase of the movement which he initiated. The man passed on, but his message abides. It was given to him to restate in kindling word the eternal truths of Scripture. He brought no new message but earnestly summoned the Church to listen to the old, old story in its revealed completeness. The conviction is growing that Albert B. Simpson was a voice to his generation like that of Luther and Wesley. Like Luther's classic on Galatians and John Wesley's immortal sermons, the writings of Dr. Simpson are a sacred heritage. Among all these treasures none is more vitally important to Christians generally or more worthy of wide dissemination than "The Holy Spirit; or, Power from on High."

WALTER M. TURNBULL.

INTRODUCTION.

BY REV. STEPHEN MERRITT.

DEAR BROTHER SIMPSON:

It was a cause of great joy to my soul to read the announcement that the first volume of *The Holy Spirit, or, Power From on High,* would soon be issued. You will remember that at the Old Orchard Convention last year I was led to exclaim, "The book of the Holy Ghost is yet unwritten," and to request the vast audience to rise and pray that the Holy Spirit might inspire Rev. A. B. Simpson to write the work of the age for Him. That this petition is now being answered is the delight of my life.

I cannot but believe that He has selected you for this work of faith and labor of love, and that He has had you in peculiar training and made Himself personally known to you, so that you may be able, with the pen of a ready writer, to make Him known to a hungry, famishing church and world. I rejoice that you know Him, and that He knows you, and I believe that you know by wisdom from above how to make Him known.

I am so glad you have written not an article, a treatise, or sermons; but volumes—to show His completeness of power, His adequateness, and adaptibility to meet every need of the body, soul, and spirit, for time and for eternity. I have not read the forthcoming volume, but shall do so with intense interest, pleasure, and profit, for in it I shall see the mind of the Spirit as expressed by Him through your God-touched pen.

What strides He has taken since you first began to

teach Him; with what desire the people receive Him, and the truth concerning Him; and how abundantly He blesses with power all who accept Him. This is the Book of His Age. Thousands will rise up and call you blessed for its publication, and your influence for Him will be greatly enhanced by Him for His glory and the delightful desire of your heart—the coming Parousia.

STEPHEN MERRITT.

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CHAPTER I.

LIKE A DOVE.

THE first emblem under which we see the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is the dove descending upon the head of Jesus at His baptism on the banks of the Jordan.

The first emblem under which the Holy Spirit is presented in the Old Testament is also a dove. In the story of creation, in the first chapter of Genesis, second verse, we read: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness brooded over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters."

This is the figure of the mother dove brooding over her nest and cherishing her young. What a strange background for such a picture; chaos, desolation, the seething waters, the hissing flames, the wild abyss, the starless night, the reign of ruin, death, and desolation!

This was the scene where the mother dove of eternal love and peace began to build her nest, and she rested not until out of that scene of wreck she had evolved a bright and happy world, and a smiling paradise, with its human family and its pure and heavenly happiness and hope.

We pass over seven chapters, and we come to another scene of desolation and wreck. The waters of the deluge are sweeping round the world. The work of twenty centuries is submerged beneath that awful flood, and the world's countless millions are lying in death beneath those waves. One solitary ship is riding above the storm with eight human beings within its walls, the sole survivors of all earth's population.

Once again we behold the figure of the dove. We read in Genesis 8: 6-12: "And it came to pass, at the end of

forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

"Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground: but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

"And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark: and the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf, pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

"And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more."

Back of this dove there is another figure, the black-winged raven, the emblem of Satan, as the other is of the Holy Ghost.

And now we see three very remarkable stages in the sending forth of this dove, and they seem to speak of three dispensations of the Holy Spirit.

First, we have the dove going forth from the ark, and finding no rest upon the wild and drifting waste of sin and judgment. This represents the Old Testament period, perhaps, when the Holy Ghost visited this sinful world, but could find no resting-place, and ever went back to the bosom of God.

Next, we have the dove going forth and returning with the olive leaf in her mouth, a symbol and a pledge of peace and reconciliation, a sign that judgment had passed and peace was returning. Surely this may beautifully represent the next stage of the Holy Spirit's manifestation, the going forth in the ministry and resur-

rection of Jesus Christ, to proclaim reconciliation to a sinful world.

But, as yet, He is not at liberty to reside in this sin-cursed earth. There is, therefore, a third stage, when, at length, the dove goes forth from the ark and returns no more, but makes the world its home, and builds its nest amid the habitations of men. This is the third and present stage of the Holy Spirit's blessed work.

Thus He has now come forth, not to visit this sinful world, returning again to heaven, but to make it His abiding home. During the ministry of Christ on earth, the Spirit dwelt in Him, and not in men. Jesus said He was *with* the disciples, but He adds, "He shall be *in* you." Like Noah's dove, still lingering in the ark, and going forth only to visit the earth, so the Holy Ghost dwelt in Jesus, and touched the hearts of men from time to time.

But now Jesus has sent Him forth, and His residence is no longer in heaven, but in the heart of the believer, and in the bosom of the Church. This earth is now His home; and here among sinful, suffering men, the same dove is building her nest and rearing her brood for the celestial realms, where they shall one day soar and sing in the light of God.

Such is the symbolical unfolding of the Holy Spirit in these two first pictures of the Old Testament. Let us now gather out of the figure itself, some of its most pointed lessons and suggestions.

I.

The first thought is motherhood. It is the figure of the mother dove. In one of the recent and most brilliant works of Mr. Drummond, he develops with great fullness the idea that the goal of nature is always motherhood.

In the vegetable creation everything moves toward

seed and fruit. The flower is but the cradle and the swaddling bands of the living germ. The plant lives simply to develop the life of another plant, to reproduce itself.

Thus, in the natural world, the first appearance of love is not in the sexual, but in the maternal relations; and in like manner, the great thought in the heart of God is motherhood, and God Himself possesses in Himself that true nature which has been manifested in the creation.

There is in the divine Trinity a personality corresponding to human relationships. Human fatherhood expresses a need which is met in God the Father. Human motherhood has its origin in the Holy Ghost. Human brotherhood, and the higher, closer fellowship of the husband and the bridegroom, are met in Christ, the Son of God, our Brother and our Bridegroom. We cannot reason out the divine Trinity, but God can make it real to our spiritual instincts.

There are times when we need a father's strength and love, and our pressed spirits cry out, "Oh, if my father were only here, how quickly he would help me!" And God our Father answers that cry.

There are times when the orphaned spirit feels the need of a mother's more delicate and tender touch, and we think how mother once used to comfort and help us as no other friend could do. Then we need the mother heart of God.

I envy not the man who has outgrown the weakness of needing a mother's love, and whose heart finds no response to such words as these:

Who fed me from her gentle breast?
Who taught me in her arms to rest?
And on my lips sweet kisses pressed?
My mother.

Who ran to help me when I fell,
And would some pretty story tell,
Or kiss the place to make it well?
My mother.

The Holy Ghost, the author of the mother's heart and the child's dependent love, is able to meet in us the deep need which has outgrown our infant years, and still looks up to God with its orphaned cry for love and sympathy.

Also there is in every human heart the memory of some brave, true brother, and a longing for a divine arm that can uphold us with a love "that sticketh closer than a brother"; yes, there is a deeper longing for a friendship more intimate and a fellowship more dear, which Jesus meets as the divine Husband, the Ishi of our heart.

All the representations which the Scriptures give us of the Holy Ghost are in harmony with this thought of divine motherhood.

The regeneration of the soul is described as a new birth, and the Holy Ghost is the mother that gives us this birth. The guidance and nurture of the Spirit after our conversion are described in language borrowed from the nursery and the home. In the deeper needs of the soul, the comfort of the Holy Ghost is described to us under the very image of a mother's caresses and a mother's love. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted, saith the Lord."

In turn, as we are filled with the Holy Ghost, we ourselves have the mother-heart for others, and are able to reflect the blessing and dispense the comfort which we have received. Our prayers for others become maternal longings, travailings, and soul-births, and we learn to say with the apostle, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you," and to understand such language as this, "As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth."

The Holy Ghost in the consecrated heart often gives a yearning for others, and a prayer for the lost and the tempted, as intensely real as the pangs of maternal

anguish and love; and people are born of us as truly as the children of our households, and are linked to us by bonds as real as our natural kindred.

II.

The figure of the dove is suggestive of peace. The dove from the ark was the messenger of peace, and brought back an olive branch as the symbol of reconciliation. Thus is the Holy Spirit the messenger of peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. He leads the soul to understand and accept the message of mercy and to find the peace of God. He then brings the deeper "peace of God, which keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Wherever the Holy Spirit reigns there is peace.

Back of the picture of the dove is the raven, restlessly passing to and fro, to and fro, to and fro, a type of the troubled spirit of evil, that finds no rest even in the pleasures of sin, but is driven from excitement to excitement in the vain pursuit of rest, until at last it is thrown upon the wild billows of a lost eternity, the victim of everlasting disquietude and unrest.

But the spirit in which the Holy Ghost rules is at rest. It has a peace that nothing can offend, "the peace of God that passeth all understanding."

III.

THE DOVE IS THE SYMBOL OF PURITY.

"Harmless as a dove," is Christ's interpretation of the beautiful emblem. The Spirit of God which is purity itself, cannot dwell in an unclean heart. He cannot abide in the natural mind. It was said of the anointing of old, "On man's flesh it shall not be poured."

The purity which the Holy Spirit brings is like a white and spotless little plant which grows up out of a heap of manure, or out of black soil, without one

grain of impurity adhering to its crystalline surface, spotless as an angel's wing.

So the Holy Spirit gives a purity of heart which brings its own protection, for it is essentially unlike the evil things which grow around it. It may be surrounded on every side with evil, but it is uncontaminated and pure because its very nature is essentially holy and divine. It cannot be soiled, because like the plumage of the dove, which, protected by its oily covering, comes forth from the miry pool unstained and unsullied by the dark waters, it sheds off every defilement and is proof against the touch of every stain.

IV.

THE DOVE IS THE SYMBOL OF GENTLENESS.

The Comforter is gentle, tender, and full of patience and love. How gentle are God's dealings even with sinners! How patient His forbearance! How tender His discipline with His own erring children! How He led Jacob, Joseph, Israel, David, Elijah, and all His ancient servants, until they could truly say, "Thy gentleness hath made me great"!

The heart in which the Holy Spirit dwells will always be characterized by gentleness, lowliness, quietness, meekness, and forbearance. The rude, sarcastic spirit, the brusque manner, the sharp retort, the unkind cut,—all these belong to the flesh. They have nothing in common with the gentle teaching of the Comforter.

The Holy Dove shrinks from the noisy, tumultuous, excited, and vindictive spirit, and finds His home in the lowly breast of the peaceful soul. "The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness, meekness."

V.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

The dove is the special emblem of affection. The special object of the divine Comforter is to "shed abroad

the love of God in our hearts," and to show that "the fruit of the Spirit is love." Wherever He dwells there is to be found a disposition of unselfishness, consideration for others, loving helpfulness, and kindness; and He wants love from us. He asks not so much our service as our communion. He has plenty to serve Him; but He wants us to love Him and to receive His tender love for us. He is longing for our affection and is disappointed when we give Him anything else.

A very sweet thought connected with the symbol of the dove, and true also of the Holy Spirit, is that we find in the Scriptures many allusions to the mourning of the dove. It is a bird of sorrow, and its plaintive notes have more of sadness in them than the voice of any other bird. Any one who has heard the cooing of the turtle dove will never forget the plaintive sadness of its tone.

How can this be true of the Holy Spirit? Simply because love is always sensitive to suffering. The more we love, the more we sorrow, especially when the loved one disappoints our expectations, or our affection. The lone dove coos for its lost mate, and mourns for its scattered brood.

And so the Holy Spirit is represented as loving us even unto the extreme of sorrow. We do not read of the anger of the Holy Ghost, but of the grief of the Spirit. "They rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit," and we are warned, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

There is a beautiful passage in James which has been unhappily translated in our Revised Version: "The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy." It ought to be, "The Spirit that dwelleth in us loveth us to jealousy." It is the figure of a love that suffers because of its intense regard for the loved object.

The Holy Ghost is so anxious to accomplish in us and for us the highest will of God, and to receive from

us the truest love for Christ, our divine Husband, that He becomes jealous when in any way we disappoint Him, or divide His love with others. Therefore, it is said in the preceding passage, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"

Oh, shall we grieve so kind a Friend? Shall we disappoint so loving a Husband? Shall we provoke so tender and unselfish a jealousy? Shall we not meet the blessed Holy Spirit with the love He brings us, and give in return our undivided and unbounded affection?

Strange, indeed, that God should have to plead with us for our love. Strange that He whom all Heaven adores should have a rival in the hearts of the children whom He has created, and the beings who owe everything they have to His infinite mercy! Strange that so gentle a Friend should have to plead so long and so tenderly for our affections!

Let us turn to Him with penitential love, and cry:

"Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours."

CHAPTER II.

THE BREATH OF GOD.

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—Genesis 2: 7.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."—John 3: 8.

"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."—John 20: 22.

THE first of these passages contains the second reference to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, and the other passages prolong the line, and fix the application of the beautiful picture in Genesis to the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

The emblem under which the Spirit is here presented to us is the breath and the air, the atmosphere in which we live, and the act by which we inhale or exhale its vital properties and its vitalizing power.

The value and importance of the atmosphere is self-evident. We can live for days without food, and for a lifetime without sight or hearing, but we cannot live an hour without breath. To breathe is the most essential of all our physical functions and is in the Scriptures almost synonymous with life.

Again and again we find such expressions as, "Every living thing that hath breath upon the earth." We cannot see it, we can scarcely feel it, and yet around us there is an ocean of air without which we could not exist, and without which almost all our senses would be blind, deaf, and vain. Sound could not be communicated without air, the sweet hymns that we have sung could not have been uttered or heard, the voices of our

friends would never reach us, and the harmonies of music would be silent and dead.

Sight also is dependent upon the atmosphere. Yonder sun seems like a ball of fire in the midst of a pall of darkness, when we get beyond the earth's atmosphere. Like a fine, transparent lens, the atmosphere receiving the solar rays, diffuses them in floods of light for the organs of vision.

Without the atmosphere heat would be unknown. In yonder upper spaces, although seeming to be nearer the sun, there is an everlasting frigid zone; and every drop of blood in our body would be frozen into ice in an instant, were we to pass beyond the tempering air which receives and distributes the solar heat.

Such is the striking and beautiful image under which the Spirit of God is represented. He brings to us the the very breath of life for spirit, soul, and body, and creates the atmosphere in which we see the things of God, hear His voice, and dwell in the warmth and radiance of His love.

The present passage unfolds the work of the Spirit in man's original creation, and also suggests the Spirit's work in the higher unfolding of His restoring and quickening grace.

The first thing we notice in this passage is the marked distinction that is made between the creation of man and that of all other animals. At the creative word, they sprang immediately into existence, and fell into their places in the great economy of nature, without further note or comment.

But when man's creation is about to begin, everything is different. By a significant pause our attention is called to a most important crisis. Then, step by step, the great transaction is accomplished, and we see the first human being coming forth from his Creator's direct touch in all the completeness of his manifold nature, the wondrous handiwork of God.

We see even the Creator Himself appearing under a new name and in an entirely new aspect. The higher criticism has been fond of questioning the unity of the book of Genesis, because this second chapter gives an entirely new name to God. Because we here meet with Jehovah Elohim, the critics have worked up the astute hypothesis that this is a different God from the Elohim of the first chapter, and that this chapter, therefore, must have had a different author. They tell us also that this is another of the old fragments of Hebrew lore that have come down to us along with Babylonian and Egyptian scrolls and tablets, and that this distinctly proves that Moses could not have been the author of both these chapters.

Ah, how much deeper is the thought of God! They used to tell us that the creation of the sun on the fourth day contradicted the statement that light was formed in the beginning. But science has lately discovered that light did exist before the sun, and still exists apart from it; and thus has this earlier wisdom fallen into a ruinous mound of folly.

Moreover, reverent and heaven taught scholarship has found that there was an infinitely wise and beautiful reason for the change in the divine Name in the second chapter of Genesis. In the first chapter the writer is speaking about dead and soulless matter, and it is quite proper that he should thus speak of God as the Creator of matter.

In the second chapter he comes to deal with God in direct relation to His children. It is the Father coming to His household. Man in his spiritual nature is now to be created and presented to us in all the tender spiritual relationships which he is to sustain to God, and to his own race. Therefore, it is as a Father that God comes down into human relations with man and reveals His name as Jehovah God, the God of infinite love and tenderness, the God who was about to send His Son,

our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The very change of name is both a mark of the kindest design and the tenderest proof of love.

Next we see the formation of the human body out of the dust of the earth. Man's form was not created out of nothing. The elements of matter were made from nothing, but man was made out of elements already existing, made however, not by a process of evolution which gradually developed a human being of a higher order, but made immediately a complete human form. It was still lifeless, until God touched it with His divine breath, from His own lips; just as in the vision of Ezekiel, where the picture of the final resurrection shows the body first appearing reorganized in all its constituent parts, "bone to its bone, with flesh and skin to cover them above; but there is no breath in them."

There is no evolution here, but the immediate act of creation, succeeded by another act of animation, inspiration, and the divine quickening of the soulless matter into immortal life.

We see here surely, the sacredness of the human body and the value and importance of life. It is the direct work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the life of a man is infinitely more precious than the life of a beast; and the crime of murder is recognized by God as a blow struck at God's own life, and one which He will most terribly avenge.

The daring act of suicide, therefore, is a defiance of the Creator and a reckless destruction of His grandest work. It is one of the awful signs of our times that not only are men killing others, but that in our public press, one of the leaders of infidelity has been allowed publicly to discuss the question of suicide, and to point out the perfect right of every man to do what he chooses with his own life. It is no wonder that such discussions have been followed by an awful increase of suicides in our midst. Such men are desperate and dreadful crim-

inals who pass redhanded in the very act and crime of rebellion into the presence and up to the judgment seat of God.

No man has a right even for an instant to entertain such a thought. Life is God's gift and man's momentous trust, to be used for God and given back to Him at last in the great account.

We see here that human life comes through the human soul, not through the human body, and springs from the direct touch of the Creator and the inspiration of the Almighty.

Man's life is not, like the life of the brute, a part of his physical organism. The human organs are complete before they receive the touch of life. Our life came not from the ground, nor from the physical forces and functions, but from the imparting of the human soul through God's direct inbreathing.

Man's life is so sacred, because it is the direct gift of God's love, and the very communication of God's own life.

We see the Holy Spirit presented here as the author not only of life, but also of mind and soul. What a glory it gives to our conception of the Holy Ghost, to think of Him as having part in creation! Job says: "Thy Spirit hath garnished the heavens." The glowing stars, the beautiful firmament, the rainbow, the golden sun, the silvery moon, the sunset clouds in all their radiant glory, are but touches of His infinite wisdom and taste.

The talents and endowments of the highest minds, the splendid genius of a Homer and a Milton, the refined taste of a Phidias and a Rembrandt, the sublime musical harmonies of a Haydn and a Beethoven, as well as the seraphic and lofty flights of an Isaiah and a John; all these likewise came originally from the Holy Spirit, and all must reflect the higher qualities of wis-

dom, grace, and glory which constitute His infinite attributes.

True, man has perverted these splendid gifts, and often made them become selfish, unholy, and even diabolical; but they are none the less splendid, and they were no less originally the gifts of the Spirit and the proofs of His wisdom and power.

Is it not inspiring to think that this Holy Ghost who fills our heart, is no mere sentiment of spiritual ecstasy or emotional joy, but is the great Mind from which all minds come, the mighty Soul by Whom all souls were made, the Infinite Spirit from whom all being emanated? As we look at the rainbow as it spans the cloud, and the verdure as it crowns the mountain, the fragrant blossoms that hide in every nook, clothe every rock, and smile on every field, let us think that these are only some of His royal robes, revealing to us a little of what His own essential glory means, and making us think: "How beautiful, how glorious, how infinite is the blessed Holy Spirit!"

Brother, sister, He made thy soul, He gave thee thy mind, He created for Himself and His high purpose thy talents and thy powers of both brain and being. What art thou doing with thy trust? What wilt thou say, when He shall ask it back, and call upon thee to give an account of thy stewardship?

We see here the peculiar characteristic of man as originally created. "Man became a living soul." The predominant characteristic of natural man is expressed by this word, "soul," just as the predominant characteristic of the new man in the New Testament is expressed by the word, "spirit."

The soul represents the intellectual and emotional elements that constitute man. The spirit represents the higher and the divine life which links us directly to God, and enables us to know and to come into relationship with divine things.

There is no doubt that man, as originally created, had also a higher and spiritual nature, because the true translation of this passage is, "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul." His life was manifold. There was physical life, mental life, and spiritual life, but the controlling element was soul. So we read in Corinthians, "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the second man Adam was made a quickening Spirit."

It would seem as if, at his fall, man lost his spiritual life, or, at least, it became so utterly subordinated to his soulish nature that the natural man was not spiritual. He needed to be born from above by the Spirit of God, and to receive a new spiritual being, in order to be saved.

Even in his highest estate Adam was distinctively a living soul, rather than a lofty spirit. His soul life was predominant. It was sinless and loyal to God, but it was a lower life than that which redeemed men now enjoy.

It was, notwithstanding, a very glorious life, received as it was by a very significant and glorious touch from the Spirit of God. "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives." The Great Artist fashioned his outward form from the finest clay, and perfected every feature and every function, and then, like a fond mother, kissed the cold lips with His own warm breath of life, flashing into the lifeless form the spark of His eternal life, and lo! the beautiful form sprang into His arms, and man became the living child of his loving Creator.

It was only a touch of life, a touch of love, that forever separated and distinguished man above all other beings as the special object of God's infinite love and care.

"Lord, what is man? Extremes how wide
In his mysterious nature join;
His flesh to worms and dust allied,
His soul immortal and divine."

Such was the Spirit's work in the original creation of man. Our text suggests, what the New Testament so freely unfolds, the higher work of the Holy Spirit in the new creation. The Lord Jesus in His discourse respecting the new birth, in the third chapter of John, gives us a very significant hint of this work under the same figure which we find in our text. There He introduces the figure of the wind in its viewless, yet mighty energy and potency, in connection with the regeneration of the human soul by the Holy Ghost.

In His closing interviews with the disciples, in the twentieth chapter of John, "He breathed upon them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." That picture is so much like the picture of our text that the one seems the complement of the other. In the one case we see the Spirit breathe the old creation into life, and in the other the same Spirit breathes into the new creation the life of God and the power of a higher principle.

The figure of the new creation runs through all the Epistles of Paul. "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation." "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "After God" distinctly implies not only resemblance to God, but derivation from God.

Now, what is the work which the Holy Spirit performs in this new creation? Is it simply the restoration of the Adamic nature in perfection, or is it something higher and more divine? Most assuredly it is the latter. "The first man," the apostle tells us, "was of the earth earthy, the second Man was the Lord from heaven; the first man was made a living soul, the second Man a quickening Spirit." Then he adds, "As

we have borne the image of the earthly, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly."

The Adamic life at its best was only a human life. The Christ life is divine. Natural life is soul life. Divine life is Spirit life.

When the New Testament talks about the natural man it does not mean a gross, sordid, sensual, brutal wretch, grovelling in swinish lusts; but it means a man with all the graces and gifts of the highest genius and the most refined culture. He may be a poet like Shakespeare, a composer like Mozart, a sculptor like Phidias, a painter like Raphael, an architect like Wren, an orator like Cicero, or a man with a face as beautiful as an angel and a life as virtuous and stainless as a marble statue, and yet be purely natural, earth-born, and merely a soulish man.

When the apostle speaks of "the natural man who perceiveth not the things of God, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," he uses the word "psychical" man. Now everybody knows that Psyche was not the figure of sensualism, but of beauty, virtue, and moral purity.

The spiritual man is entirely distinct from all this. His life ever finds its centre in God, and its delight in His will and fellowship. Its sphere of existence is not the earth, but the coming world, the heavenly kingdom. It does not belong here. Its very instincts turn higher. It has its natural affection and qualities; but they have been transformed by death into a higher life and have risen from the old to the new life, from transient to everlasting. It is true by the very nature of things that "they that are of the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit."

As the river runs to the sea, as the fire ascends to the sun,

"So a soul that's born of God
Pants to see His glorious face;
Upward tends to His abode,
To rest in His embrace."

Thus the chief characteristic of the spiritual man is to have his abode with the Heavenly Spirit. It is not so much the man, as the addition to the man, which constitutes his high character and heavenly power. A spiritual man is not so much a man possessing a strong spiritual character as a man filled with the Holy Spirit. So the apostle says: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

The glory of the new creation, then, is not only that it recreates the human spirit, but also that it fits it for the abode of God Himself, and makes it dependent upon Him for its life, just as the flower is dependent upon the sun, and the child upon the mother. The highest spirituality, therefore, is the most utter helplessness, the most entire dependence, and the most complete possession by the Holy Spirit. The beautiful act of Christ in breathing upon His disciples, and imparting to them from His own lips the very Spirit that was already in Him, expressed in the most vivid manner the crowning glory of the new creation. When the Holy Spirit thus possesses us, He fills every part of our being. Our spirit is His central throne, our soul is under His control, and even our body becomes "the temple of the Holy Ghost." We may be sanctified wholly, that is, in the whole man; and our whole "spirit, soul, and body preserved blameless unto the coming of Jesus Christ."

The final stage of this glorious indwelling will be reached when the vision of Ezekiel is fulfilled, and the Spirit shall breathe into the resurrection body the life of glorious immortality. "And we shall be like Him when we shall see Him as He is."

There are some lessons which we may learn from this picture and from the whole subject.

1. The lower is dependent upon the higher, and should be kept subordinate to it.

Man's physical frame was lifeless until his higher nature, the soul, entered it; and then he lived. So, still, our life is dependent upon our higher being; and life and health come not from below, but from above and from within.

This is the essential principle of divine healing, founded as it is on the great law of creation, and expressed by Christ Himself in His answer to the tempter, about His own physical life and ours, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that passeth out of the mouth of God."

Our higher spiritual nature should control the soul. Just as the soul is superior to the body, so the spirit should be predominant to the soul. The fatal defect of natural life is that the soul is predominant, and the natural mind controls both spirit and body. The cultivated Athenian, therefore, is just as much in the flesh as the brutal African savage.

The true life is where the body and the soul are under the control of the spirit, and the spirit is under the control of the Holy Ghost, the indwelling Spirit and Life of God.

2. The beautiful figure of the breath and the air teaches us some practical lessons about the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

It is a simple law of nature, that air always comes in to fill a vacuum. You can produce a draught at any time, by heating the air until it ascends, and then letting the cold air rush in to supply its place. Thus we can always be filled with the Holy Spirit by providing a vacuum. This breath is dependent upon exhausting the previous breath before you can inhale a fresh one. We must in like manner empty our hearts of the

last breath of the Holy Spirit that we have received; for it becomes impure the moment we have received it, and we need a new supply to prevent spiritual asphyxia.

We must learn the secret of breathing out, as well as breathing in. Now the breathing in will continue if the other part is rightly done. One of the best ways to make room for the Holy Spirit is to recognize the needs that come into the life as vacuums for Him to fill. We shall find plenty of needs all around us to be filled; and, as we pour out our lives in holy service, He will pour His in, in full measure.

A board of trustees once put a heating apparatus into a church, and then put in a furnace, and announced the opening service. But the church was as cold as a barn. The hot air would not come in, although the ducts were open and the fire burning at its hottest. An expert was called in, who quietly told them that while they had made provision for letting in the fresh air, they had made none for letting out the old air in the building, and that no fresh air could come in until the old air was expelled. As a result the people sat there shivering.

Thus some of us are shivering and wondering why the Holy Spirit does not fill us. We have plenty coming in, but we do not give it out. Give out the blessing you have, start larger plans for service and blessing. You will soon find that the Holy Ghost is before you, and that He will present you with blessings for goodness and will give you all that He can trust you to give away to others.

There is a beautiful fact in nature which has its spiritual parallels. There is no music so heavenly as that of an Æolian harp. This harp is nothing but a set of musical cords arranged in harmony, and then left to be touched by the unseen fingers of the wandering winds. As the breath of heaven floats over the chords, it is said

that notes almost divine float out upon the air, as if a choir of angels were wandering around and touching the strings.

It is possible to keep our hearts so open to the touch of the Holy Spirit that He can play upon them at will. As we quietly wait in the pathway of His service, again and again the touch of hands unseen will wake the echoes, and the heavenly song will spring within the depths of our being, and we shall wonder at our strange gladness. But it is still the Æolian harp of a heart wholly consecrated and attuned to God, and under the touch and breathing of the Holy Ghost.

This is what it means, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."

CHAPTER III.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.

"So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."—Genesis 3: 24.

"And the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."—Eph. 6: 17.

"For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."—Hebrews 4: 12.

WE are accustomed to think of this scene at the gate of Eden as a picture of terror and judgment. Cowering under their awful curse, the fugitive pair stand in the front of the picture, hurrying forth from their happy Eden home, to return no more; while behind them, and above the gate that was closing upon them forever, a fiery sword flashes with angry severity, to keep the way of the tree of life from which they are henceforth to be debarred, as they go forth on their sorrowful journey to the grave.

But as we take a second look at that glorious symbol, it assumes a brighter phase; until, after a little while, we learn to behold it as a symbol of grace, and not of judgment. Doubtless it so became to them, and ere long, the very symbol of the divine presence that marked the place of worship where they came to meet with their covenant God at the gate of Eden.

The figure of the cherubim, which appears for the first time in this chapter, becomes in the later Scriptures the very signal of God's covenant love and manifested presence. We see it in the tabernacle of the wilderness above the mercy-seat. We see it in the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel in connection with the throne of God. And

it reappears in the Apocalypse in the vision of heavenly glory.

It was doubtless a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, or, at least, a symbol of His person and glory. The four faces of the lion, the ox, the eagle, and the man, represent His kingliness, His sacrifice, His humanity, and His Deity; and the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are just an unfolding of His person in these four glorious aspects.

As this figure appeared at the gate of their lost Eden, it became to our first parents the symbol of Him, the promised seed of the woman, in whom that lost inheritance was to be restored and that forfeited paradise regained. It did not mean that the tree of life was lost forever; but rather it pointed out the new way by which that tree could be restored again, restored by way of the cherubim, through the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SWORD?

The sword was the token and emblem of the Holy Spirit, even as the cherubim was the figure of Christ. The word in the Hebrew is, The Lord God Shekinah, the cherubim, the flaming sword. This was the same Shekinah that afterward appeared in the Holy of Holies. This flaming sword, therefore, was nothing else than the special symbol of God's immediate presence with the Holy Ghost.

It was the symbol, therefore, of grace rather than of judgment; and while it involved essentially the principle of the divine righteousness, which could no longer permit a sinful race to partake of the tree of life in the old way, yet it also pointed forward to the coming redemption and the provision through Jesus Christ which was to open those gates of mercy even to sinful men through the blood of Jesus and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit.

The flaming sword at the gate of Eden was the embryo of the cross. It emphasized the great truth that judgment must come before mercy, that death must be the gate to life, and that the old natural life must fall before the piercing sword, ere we can enter through the gates of the new paradise, and partake of the tree of life, that life that is incorruptible and everlasting.

I.

It represents the slaying power of the Spirit. The sword is the symbol of death, and death is the deepest revelation of Christ's great salvation. The grave is forever the symbol of the Gospel, and the Cross means not only His death, but ours too. Therefore Satan hated it, and tried to make Peter reject it, as he cried, "Pity Thyself, Lord"; but Jesus refused it, and told him his thought was born of Satan.

The reason men try to get the Cross and the Blood out of their new Gospel is because they have a shrewd suspicion that as there was a cross for Him, so there must also be a cross for them; but in no other way can we enter into life everlasting. All that is born of the flesh is flesh, and under the curse. Every fragment and fibre of the natural life is evil. You may coax it, you may flatter it, and it will smile upon you; but some day, if you cross its will, it will spring upon you and strike you.

Therefore, the sentence of death has passed upon all the Adam race, and the fiery sword must destroy every vestige of the old humanity before the new life can enter in and partake of that life-giving tree which stands behind the glorious cherubim.

And this is the work of the Holy Spirit, to put to death the life of self and sin. We cannot do it, He alone can. We may try to crucify ourselves and mutilate ourselves with a thousand blows; but every time

we will succeed in just missing a vital part, and the old *I* will come through the process, all alive still. Only the flaming sword can smite to death the self-centred, self-destroying life of the natural man. We, therefore, read in the eighth of Romans, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

We see this truth foreshadowed through the whole Old Testament. The destruction of the race by the flood was but a figure. The Apostle Peter says of the true baptism, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Therefore, the apostle intimates that the eight souls who passed through the waters of the flood were saved *by* water, not *from* water.

The flood that destroyed and swept away the ungodly race that was engulfing everything in corruption, was God's merciful judgment, sending salvation through destruction. God Himself had said, "The end of all flesh is come before me." The deluge was just the death and burial of the great putrid carcase of corrupt flesh into which humanity had ripened.

The sacrifice on Mount Moriah was another foreshadowing of the life that comes through self-surrender. The sufferings of Joseph were the very pathway to his elevation and coronation. The passage through the Red Sea was Israel's baptism of death. The death of the first-born and the destruction of Egypt's host in the same flood emphasized and vivified the same picture. And the redemption of Israel's firstborn was God's own striking figure of the fact that the whole nation was accounted dead, and saved as from the dead.

Before Israel could enter Canaan, the old generation was left in Egypt to die, and a new race passed through the gates of Kadesh. The passage of the Jordan was but the type of deeper death. The death of Moses and the succession of Joshua who alone could bring them

into the promised land, still further emphasized the death-side of their higher inheritance and ours.

The circumcision was the figure of God's death-stroke upon our natural life. All the types of the canonical law were touched by the death-mark. Through the blood of burnt offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings, the Hebrew worshippers and the Aaronic priests entered into their place of privilege and acceptance.

The cleansing of the leper was accompanied by the touching figure of the death of the little bird and the sprinkling of its blood upon the wing of its companion. The two were the parable of God's cleansing of the sinful heart of man. Even the razor must cut off the last hair of his natural strength before he could pass in among the worshippers. And in the ordinance of the red heifer, not only the scarlet wool that was the figure of sin, but also the little hyssop which represented our natural life and the finest tendrils of its strength and beauty, must be consumed with the burning heifer.

Not only must "the grass wither, but the flower of the grass must perish, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." The death sentence must be executed against the beauty and the blossom, as well as against the grossness and the sensuality of the natural life.

Even the very best things become a curse to us so long as we hold them with our natural hands and hearts and self-centred spirits. That sweet and innocent child whom God has taught you to love, can be only an idol until he ceases to be your child, and becomes God's child, and the death stroke passes upon your love, and you learn in the resurrection life to hold him for God, and love him not as a selfish pleasure but as a sacred trust.

Even the husband into whose strong hand God may have put your trusting little hand, may become but a substitute for your God, and a separating influence from Him, until you die to your own selfish affection, and learn to love him not for your own gratification,

or his, but in God and unto God and for his own highest good.

Money cannot hurt you if you do not love it for its own sake. It is not your fortune that hurts you, but your clinging fondness for it; and so long as that fondness is alive, your little world of five hundred dollars a year is as much hindrance to you as would be a millionaire's palaces and vast investments. It is not the size of your world that God sees, but the extent to which it fills your heart.

Even your Christian influence, your reputation as a worker for God, and your standing among your brethren, may be to you an idol that must die, before you can be free to live for Him alone.

If you have ever noticed the type on a printed page, you must have seen that the little "*i*" has always a dot over it, and that this dot elevates it above the other letters in the line.

Now, each of us is a little *i*; and over every one of us there is a little dot of self-importance, self-will, self-interest, self-confidence, self-complacency, or something to which we cling and for which we contend, which just as surely reveals self-life as if it were a mountain of real importance.

This *i* is a rival of Jesus Christ, an enemy of the Holy Ghost, and of our peace and life. Therefore, God has decreed its death, and the Holy Spirit, with His flaming sword, is waiting to destroy it, that we may be able to enter through the gates and come to the Tree of Life.

How can this be accomplished?

1. We must ourselves consent to it. We must recognize the true character of our self-life and the real quality of the evil thing. We must consent to its destruction, and we ourselves must take it as Abraham did Isaac, and lay it at the feet of God in willing sacrifice.

This is a hard work for the natural heart; but the moment the will has been yielded and the choice has been made, that death is past; the agony is over, and we are astonished to find that the death is accomplished.

Usually the crisis of life in such cases hangs upon a single point. God does not need to strike us in a hundred places to inflict a death wound. There is one point that touches the heart, and that is the point God usually strikes, the dearest thing in our life, the decisive thing in our plans, the citadel of the will, the centre of the heart. When we yield there, there is little left to yield anywhere else; and when we refuse to yield at this point, a spirit of evasion and compromise enters into all the rest of our life.

The man or woman who has honestly and entirely met God at the decisive point will always be found uncompromising and thorough at every other crisis; and the man or woman who has begun with a half-surrendered will always has a reservation up to the end of the chapter, unless he meets with God at some later point and begins where he ought to have begun before.

The cause of Saul's ruin was his unwillingness to obey God and yield up Agag and Amalek to death. Saul carried out the divine commission through every chapter but one. He fought his battles bravely, he managed his campaigns skillfully, he subdued Amalek, he captured Agag, he left no point in the possession of the enemy; but he kept the best of the spoil and the life of the king for his own gratification, pretending that he did it for the worship of God.

This was the cause of his ruin. Old Samuel gave to the ages to come an object lesson of what God meant when he took his great broadsword and hewed Agag to pieces before the king, and told his cowardly master "that obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

At one time when we talked with a dear friend who

had been struggling for years to enter into a satisfactory spiritual experience, she told us how disappointed and unsatisfied her heart was. As we looked at her earnest face it seemed to us that there must be something in the way, and we asked her if there were not some reservation in her entire consecration. We did not need to wait for the answer for it bespoke itself. We then asked her if she would not be brave enough to let the last cord go, to give herself unreservedly to Christ at any cost, and especially to let go the thing that she shrank most at the thought of surrendering. She looked so sadly in our face, and answered, "I have not the courage." Alas! it is the old and oft-repeated story; and yet those coward hearts who shrink from God's gentle sword will yet have to bear sufferings inconceivably more severe, and to be pierced with sorrows that make one's heart ache even to think of.

The brave heart that dares to die once for all and forever is the wise heart, the happy heart, the heart that finds "the yoke easy and the burden light."

Beloved, will you dare to die, or rather to yield unto death that thing in your heart, your life, your will, which constitutes the strength of your natural life, and the axis around which all your being is enfolded?

Having yielded yourself unto death, you must next believe that God accepts you, and that the Holy Ghost undertakes the work, and really accomplishes it. The command of the Scriptures is very simple and explicit at this point, "Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This act is purely a matter of faith. Faith and sight always differ to such an extent that, while to your senses it does not seem to be so, your faith must still reckon it as true. This is a very difficult attitude to hold, and only as we thoroughly believe God, can we thus reckon upon His Word and His Working. As we do so, how-

ever, faith will convert it into fact, and it will be even so.

These two words, "yield" and "reckon," are passwords into the resurrection life. They are like the two edges of the "Sword of the Spirit" through which we enter into crucifixion with Christ.

This act of surrender and this reckoning of faith are recognized in the New Testament as marking a very definite crisis in the spiritual life. It does not mean that we are expected to be going through a continual dying, but that there should be one very definite act of dying, and then a constant habit of reckoning ourselves as dead and meeting everything from this standpoint.

In the sixth chapter of Romans, the apostle takes the position that we are to meet God as those that are alive from the dead, and thus enjoy the benefit of an accomplished act of crucifixion. Once for all we are to hand over our sin, our self, and all our belongings to the Holy Ghost; and henceforth, whatever comes up in us, we are to reckon it as no longer a part of ourselves, but to steadily refuse to recognize it, and count it simply as a temptation. Thus we shall have power to overcome it, and shall be able to maintain our consciousness of purity and victory unmoved.

As any evil comes up, and the consciousness of any unholy thing touches our inner senses, it is our privilege at once to hand it over to the Holy Ghost and to lay it upon Jesus, as something already crucified with Him; and as of old, in the case of the sin offering, it will be carried without the camp and burned to ashes.

There may be deep suffering, there may be protracted pain, it may be intensely real; but throughout all there will be a very sweet and sacred sense of God's presence, of intense purity in our whole spirit, and of our separation from the evil which is being consumed. Truly, it will be borne without the camp, so that even the smell

of the burning will not defile the holy sanctuary of the consecrated heart; and we shall come out of the fire without even the smell of the flames upon our garments.

It is so blessed to have the Holy Spirit slay things. No sword but His can pass so perfectly between us and the evil, so that it consumes the sin without touching the spirit. Just as the skillful surgeon, with brave heart and keen instrument, can pass between the arteries and veins with such exquisite delicacy that no fibre is severed, and no injury done to a single organ, so the blessed Holy Spirit, and He alone, can separate the evil from the good, and "pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow."

II.

This brings us to the searching power of the Holy Spirit, for this fiery sword is a heart-searching weapon as well as a sin destroying power.

Undoubtedly the passage in the fourth chapter of Hebrews already quoted, refers to this ancient figure. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight."

There is a strong and subtle power in electric fire to search out and discriminate between substances and detect abnormal and unwholesome conditions. When the electric sponge passes over the human frame, it leaves no sensation in the healthful places; but if there is disease anywhere it will cling to the spot and seem to search it out and penetrate it with a subtle touch, often with the keenest pain.

In like manner the Holy Ghost passes through those portions of our being that are right and pure, without any sense of resistance, or, perhaps, without any sen-

sation whatever. He has such free course that He just seems to blend with our own consciousness. But when He comes to anything wrong, there is immediate resistance; and as He presses His hand upon it, there is intense suffering.

The sword of the Spirit is searching out the evil and compelling it to declare itself, just as the skirmishing companies in the advance guard of the army, by their firing and their feint attacks, bring out the foe and compel him to show his position.

The greatest hindrance to our spiritual life and progress is found in the disguise of the enemy and the deception of our own nature. The evil cannot be crucified until it is recognized, diagnosed, brought into the light, and delivered over to death.

Self clothes itself in so many disguises that nothing but the piercing sword of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures can compel it to take its true place, and own its evil character.

Some one has said that it is half the battle of life to call things by their true names. The Holy Spirit searches out our sins, and He finds sin in many places where our own self-complacency would never have suspected it. Not only does He detect and condemn the grosser forms of immorality and disobedience, which have to deal directly with the ten commandments and the law of righteousness; but He brings us face to face with the law of love, and shows us that even the unkindly thought is murder, the unforgiving spirit is an unpardonable sin, the habit of living to ourselves rebellion against God, and a selfish motive, even in the holiest act, a soul-defiling sin.

He brings us face to face with the law of faith, and shows us that to doubt God is a crime, to treasure an anxious care for the morrow is wickedness, to pray in unbelief is to take the name of God in vain, and, in short, that "whatever is not of faith is sin."

He takes us through the realm of truth and error. He gives us the touchstone whereby we detect the false, and learn to answer even Satan's quotation of Scripture by Christ's own weapon, "It is written again."

He discriminates between the false peace and the true, the earthly and the incorruptible joy, the love that is purely a natural instinct and the charity that is Christ's love, which never faileth, the zeal of Jehu, which is but a selfish passion, and the holy zeal that burns as strongly when no man approves, and stands as firmly when it costs us our very life, as when it leads us to a throne. He discriminates between the false and the true worship, the prayer prompted by the Holy Spirit to the Father who seeth in secret, and the religious emotion which is kindled in the æsthetic nature by an eloquent sermon, a pathetic story, a sentimental appeal, or a sublime musical symphony which may bring tears to the eyes while the heart is as hard as adamant to God and our fellowmen.

He shows us the difference between true and false submission and the weakness that yields to sickness and Satan. On the other hand, He shows us the true patience that lovingly bows to the will of God, but refuses the weights that the adversary would put upon us.

He leads us to pray with the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

He gives us that perfect abandonment of spirit which makes us willing to be searched and glad to be laid open to the eye of God, and to cry, "See if there be in me any way of grief," as the margin reads, or "any way of pain," as the new version renders it. It makes us glad to be sanctified from not only the wicked but also the earthly thing, and to be so separated from all self-life that every way of pain shall be prevented,

and everything in us that could hurt us shall be subdued. Thus shall we be enabled not only to lay aside the sin that so easily besets us, but every weight that would so lightly hold us back.

The blessed Holy Spirit, who possesses the consecrated heart, is intensely concerned for our highest life, and watches us with a sensitive, and even a jealous love. Very beautiful is the true translation of that ordinary passage in the Epistle of James, "The Spirit that dwelleth in us loveth us to jealousy."

The heart of the Holy Ghost is intensely concerned in preserving us from every stain and blemish, and bringing us into the very highest possibilities of the will of God.

The Heavenly Bridegroom would have His Church free not only from every spot, but also from "every wrinkle, or any such thing." The spot is the mark of sin, but the wrinkle is the sign of weakness, age, and decay. He wants no such defacing touch upon the holy features of His Beloved. Therefore, the Holy Ghost, who is the Executor of His will, and the divine Messenger whom He sends to call, separate, and bring home His Bride, is jealously concerned in fulfilling in us all the Master's will, and is ever searching us through and through, with more and more tenderness, and with the most earnest solicitude, to find out every hidden fault and every unsupplied lack, and to bring us up into the fullness of the stature of spiritual manhood and entire preparation for the marriage of the Lamb.

Shall we welcome His loving scrutiny and His faithful care? Shall we cry,

"Search me, O God, search me and know my heart,
Search me and try me in the hidden part;
Cleanse me and make me holy as Thou art,
And lead me in the way everlasting."

III.

THE SUBDUING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Ghost is God's Executive not only for the salvation and sanctification of His people, but for the conviction of sinners and the judgment of wicked men, the destruction of the enemies of God, and the final punishment of the devil and his angels.

This sword is God's weapon for slaying the proud and willful sinner and laying him at the feet of mercy. We can entertain and interest men, but only the Holy Ghost can convict them of sin, and pierce them to the heart with profound and soul-saving conviction. We are so glad that there is One who bears this mighty sword, and uses it through His Holy Word, when faithfully presented, to break the sinner's heart and bring him to the feet of Jesus.

But the Holy Spirit is also God's mighty hand to avenge His honor against the wicked, and punish those who disobey Him and harm His people. The same power that struck down Ananias and Sapphira in Pentecostal days is still in the church and the world; and wherever God's presence is, there, in a remarkable degree, His judgments are made known.

It is a very solemn thing to presume against the Holy Ghost. He is the author of human life, and in a moment He can take it away. "If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment," God Himself hath said, and "Who is he that can deliver out of my hand?" That is a true and awful word: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord," and again, "Defraud not one another, for God is the avenger of all such."

I would not like to have orphan children and widowed wives cry out against me to God. I would not like to have the little hand of wronged and innocent children pleading to heaven for my punishment. I would not

like to have to meet that tremendous sentence, after a life of reckless evil-speaking against the servants of God, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." I would rather play with the forked lightning, or take in my hands living wires with their fiery current, than speak a reckless word against any servant of Christ, or idly repeat the slanderous darts which thousands of Christians are hurling on others, to the hurt of their own souls and bodies.

You may often wonder, perhaps, why your sickness is not healed, your spirit filled with the joy of the Holy Ghost, or your life blessed and prosperous. It may be that some dart which you have flung with angry voice, or in an idle hour of thoughtless gossip, is pursuing you on its returning way, as it describes the circle which always brings back to the source from which it came every shaft of bitterness, and every idle and evil word.

Let us remember that when we persecute or hurt the children of God, we are but persecuting Him, and hurting ourselves far more.

Finally, there is an hour coming, in which "the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan, the piercing serpent, even leviathan, that crooked servant; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

Then even Satan himself shall feel the sharp and fiery force of that flaming sword, which he saw for the first time in its awful gleam, as he went out from Eden's gate with the fearful crime of man's destruction upon his head, and the tremendous curse which that fiery sword is yet to execute.

That hour has not yet fully come; but even yet, thank God, that Blessed Holy Spirit is here to resist and to overcome the power of the destroyer.

He was Christ's strength and defence in the conflict in the wilderness, and He Himself hath said, "When

the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him."

There are some things that only God can wither; and it is very blessed that, in connection with the only miracle of judgment that Christ performed, the withering of the fig tree, He gave to us His strongest lesson upon human faith, and told us that we might claim such faith as would wither the barren fig tree, and destroy the powers of evil that were too strong for us.

It is blessed to have a God who knows how not only to cleanse and purify us, but to destroy our spiritual foes, and to deal even with our human adversaries. "Our God is a consuming fire, and the Lord shall judge His people." If we could only realize what those tremendous words mean, "Our God is a consuming fire," we should feel so sorry for the man who wrongs us, that we should wish him no evil, but would tremble at the thought of his judgment. We would get down upon our knees and plead with God to have mercy upon him.

Beloved, let us pass through this flaming sword without a reservation. Then we shall not only be fearless of its power to harm us, but it will be our mighty weapon against every adversary and every evil, and the power of our aggressive warfare for the service of men and the triumph of our Master's Kingdom.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE.

"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."—Exodus 13: 21, 22.

"And the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud of darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all night."—Exodus 14: 19, 20.

"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and the fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."—Exodus 40: 34-38.

"And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."—Numbers 10: 34, 36.

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."—I Corinthians 10: 1, 2.

THE application to the Holy Spirit of these beautiful passages, and of the sublime figure that runs through all of them, is rendered certain by the words of the prophet Isaiah, in the sixty-third chapter.

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them: and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

"But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them.

"Then He remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is He that put His Holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make Himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?

"As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst Thou lead Thy people, to make Thyself a glorious name."

The prophet expressly recognizes the Holy Spirit as the presence who dwelt in the midst of Israel, and led them through the Red Sea and the wilderness.

The figure under which He is represented in these passages is striking and sublime. It was customary for ancient armies, when marching through a foreign country, to be led, especially by night, by great illuminations of torches and beacons carried in front of the advancing host, and rising in the darkess with lurid smoke and flame.

It would not, therefore, be altogether surprising for the host of Israel to see in front the majestic signal of the pillar of cloud and fire; and yet, this was no merely human beacon light. With a majesty unearthly and divine, it reared its fiery column to the sky, and marched, like a mighty sentinel, before the host, pausing when they were to rest, moving when they were to advance, separating them from their foes, and sometimes

spreading its folds like the canopy of a great celestial tent about their heads, and sheltering them from the fiery heat of the desert sun.

1. It was a supernatural symbol. They were to be guided henceforth by Jehovah Himself. This was their peculiar distinction, that "the Lord alone did lead them." This was the place where Moses was interceding for them with God. "Wherein shall we be distinct from all the other people of the earth, except Thou go with us," and His gracious answer was, "My presence shall go with you and I will give you rest."

The pillar of cloud and fire did not represent even an angel's guidance and guardianship. It was the sign of God's own presence.

In the same way the Church of the living God has a supernatural leadership. The Christian has a divine guide. Our holy Christianity is not a collection of wise human opinions, and an organization combining the strongest forces of human wisdom and power. It is nothing, if it is not divine. Give us a supernatural religion, or none at all.

The church of the Apostles was a living miracle, and so should the church of the nineteenth century be. Anything less and anything else is a disappointment to God and to every true man.

Not with such transcendent portents as in days of old does He now appear. But none the less real are His living presence and His mighty working in the hearts of His people and in the events of His providence.

Why should God be less real and glorious today than in the days of Moses, the triumphs of Joshua, and the miracles of Pentecost? Let us send up to Him the heartfelt prayer, "Awake, O arm of the Lord, as in the days of old"! And let us hear in answer, His own summons to us: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem!"

2. The pillar of cloud and fire was a source of light, of truth and guidance to His people. Barbaric superstition delights in the wonderful, but divine power manifests itself in the practical and the useful. God wants not to play with us, as a magician with his wondering audience, but to guide us as a shepherd would his flock. Because He wants to give us His life, His Word has little to say about subjects that appeal principally to our curiosity, but speaks mainly to the intelligence, the understanding, and the heart.

The Holy Ghost comes not to give us extraordinary manifestations, but to give us life and light. The nearer we come to Him, the more simple will His illumination and leading be. He comes to "guide us into all truth." He comes to shed light upon our own hearts, and to show us ourselves. He comes to reveal Christ, to give, and then to illumine the Holy Scriptures, and to make divine realities vivid and clear to our spiritual apprehension. He comes as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, to "enlighten the eyes of our understanding, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."

Without Him there is no true light. These holy mysteries, these divine realities which to us are so dear, are incomprehensible to the most intelligent human minds. Two men sitting side by side hear the same truths, read the same words, live under the same religious influences. To the one they are uninteresting and unreal, while to the other they are his very life.

As of old, when the same cloud was light to Israel, and darkness to the Egyptians, "so that they came not near each other all the night," so still it is true that "the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither indeed can he know them, for they are

spiritually discerned; but he that is spiritual searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

3. As it was a pillar of cloud as well as of light, so, as we have seen, the Holy Ghost is as dark to the unbeliever as He is light to the saint. The things of God are as dark to the world as they are beautiful and plain to the true disciple. And even to God's children there is an element of cloud, as well as luminousness.

There is a veiled light which is as necessary sometimes as the unclouded sun. The Holy Ghost is given to reveal many things to us, "but we cannot bear them now." He reserves His deeper teachings until we can stand them and understand them. We do not always see our way, and it is better that we do not. We must learn, as well as trust, even in the cloud. The very highest lessons on faith are taught by the veiled light, and the way we cannot understand. "I will lead them by the way they know not," is still His word to every trusting child; but He always adds, "These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

The presence of clouds upon your sky, and trials in your path, is the very best evidence that you are following the pillar of cloud, and walking in the presence of God. They had to enter the cloud before they could behold the glory of the transfiguration. A little later that same cloud became the chariot to receive the ascending Lord, and it is still waiting as the chariot that will bring His glorious appearing.

Still it is true that while "clouds and darkness are round about His throne," mercy and truth are ever in their midst, and shall go before His face.

Perhaps the most beautiful and gracious use of the cloud was to shelter them from the fiery sun. Like a great umbrella, that majestic pillar spread its canopy above the camp, and became a shielding shadow from the burning heat in the treeless desert. No one who

has never felt an oriental sun can fully appreciate how much this means,—a shadow from the heat.

So the Holy Spirit comes between us and the fiery, scorching rays of sorrow and temptation, and under His shadow we sit and sing:

"All my hope on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing."

4. It was a pillar of fire. Fire is more than light. It not only illumines, it warms, it purifies, it destroys. It is the same Holy Ghost who baptizes with water and with fire, but it is not the same measure of the baptism.

The baptism of fire is a baptism that penetrates the inmost fibres of our being, consuming the old life, cleansing and quickening our entire being, and enduing us with power from on high.

God wants to bring every one of us to such a place, that we shall not fear the fire, because everything combustible will have been consumed.

5. The pillar went before them. They saw it first in front of them, far off, and far above them. It came to them first when they were in Egypt, and it led them out of the land of bondage.

And so the Holy Spirit comes to us even in our life of sin, and leads us out of the world to Christ, and to begin our pilgrimage toward our Promised Land.

The presence of the Holy Ghost in His first manifestation is distant, and we shrink, perhaps, from His closer touch. We know Him as One that brings to us the knowledge of God, the message of Christ, and the hope of salvation, and guides us in our first steppings into Christian life; but we have not yet come to know Him as our indwelling Guest and our everlasting Comforter.

6. The pillar of cloud came closer to them, passed through the camp, and baptized them in its very presence, and then passed and stood behind them. This was as they went through the waters of the Red Sea. When that hour of peril came, and they walked down by faith into what seemed a living death, then their glorious Guide came nearer to their trembling hearts, enfolded them in His very arms, and then stood behind them like a wall of defence against their foes.

Thus when we step out in living faith, and cross the Red Sea which separates us from our past and sinful life, and we go down into the waters of death with Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes nigher and baptizes us with His very touch and presence.

The baptism of water, which is the type of death, is significant of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. When Jesus went down into the Jordan and received baptism at the hands of John, "He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, like a dove descending, and it abode upon Him." And the promise of the Spirit, in Acts was connected with baptism. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remissions of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." So we read that "they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." As they stepped into the Red Sea, the heavenly cloud enwrapped its folds around them, and they were immersed in both baptisms. Probably at the moment when the cloud passed through the midst of the camp, they were less conscious of its presence than they had been when it stood in the front.

So when we pass into the cloud we are not conscious of it. All we are conscious of is mist and darkness, so that, frequently, when we receive the Holy Ghost we are not directly conscious of what is occurring. We are, perhaps, so plunged in darkness, so consumed with hunger and desire, and so constantly reaching out to

God that we do not realize our own condition. All the better, should it be so.

A friend said to me the other day, "I am so hungry. I so long for the baptism of the Holy Ghost." I asked him, "Who made you so hungry? Who gave you this longing? It was the very Holy Ghost. He is already with you in the shadow-side of the blessing, and He who gave the capacity for the appetite is Himself near to meet it and satisfy it."

7. The pillar stood behind them.

The Holy Spirit is ever our rear-guard. He takes our past and hides it from us. Behind them lay Egypt and the Egyptians, all the past with its sin and its shame, and all their adversaries.

Thus the Holy Ghost shuts us off from all that we have been, and from all that can come against us. Oh, how blessed it is, to put Him between you and your sins, between you and your troubles, between you and your enemies, between you and your memories, and to have Him for your glorious rearward!

8. The pillar of cloud and fire, a little later, came and dwelt within them. There came a day,—and it was an era in their history,—when a very wonderful change occurred in the position of that pillar. It was the first day of the first month, in the second year of their history.

They had just completed the erection of the tabernacle, that simple and divinely planned little sanctuary, which was God's perfect pattern and type of the Church and the individual saint. Every board, tache, loop, and curtain had been finished and placed according to God's precise command. Every article of furniture was in its place, and they simply took their hands off, and gave it God, anointing it with oil, as the symbol of the Holy Spirit's receiving and accepting the offering.

Immediately that majestic cloud which had crowned the mount with its fiery glory, and floated in the heavens in its lofty grandeur, stooped from the skies and entered that holy place; and there, in the Holy of Holies, between the wings of the cherubim and the mercy seat, it took its place as the glowing Shekinah, that mysterious light and awful flame, which henceforth became the supernatural sign of God's immediate presence, and which lit up the holy chamber with supernatural light and glory. God had moved into His consecrated and accepted abode, and henceforth He was no longer at a distance on a throne of glory, but within the midst of Israel, seated on the throne of grace.

And so in the opening verses of the very next chapter we read that God spoke unto Moses, not from the mountain, nor from the cloud, but from the tabernacle. Mystery of mysteries! Gift of gifts! Privilege unspeakable and divine! This is the promise which He has at length fulfilled to His Church and His people, and which every believer may now personally claim. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

"If any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me." "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Where is thy God? Yonder on a throne of glory, in the heights of heaven, or here in the sanctuary of your heart, enthroned within you?

Yes, this is the second great era of Christian life, the first day of the second year. The first year was the Passover, the sprinkled blood, the acceptance of Jesus as the Saviour. That was the beginning of Israel's history, for God said it should be the beginning of months. But this is the second blessing, a crisis just as definite, an era just as marked, a moment just as eternally memorable. That was Calvary. This is Pentecost.

It has its time, and there is a day, when Pentecost has fully come. No soul that has ever known it can mistake it or forget it.

Beloved, has it come to you, or rather has He come to abide in you forever?

9. The pillar of cloud and fire continued to lead them thenceforward in all their journeys. When they were to march, it moved before them. When they were to rest, it paused and spread its covering wings above them, as the mother bird brooding over her young, as the mighty canopy of a heavenly tent under which they were gathered.

And so the Holy Spirit is our Guide, our Leader and our Resting-place. There are times when He presses us forward into prayer, into service, into suffering, into new experiences, new duties, new claims of faith and hope and love; but there are times when He arrests us in our activity, and rests us under His overshadowing wing, and quiets us in the secret place of the Most High, teaching us some new lesson, breathing into us some deeper strength or fullness, and then leading us on again, at His bidding alone. He is the true guide of the saint, and the true leader of the Church, our wonderful Counsellor, our unerring Friend. He who would deny the personal guidance of the Holy Ghost in order that he might honor the Word of God as our only guide, must dishonor that other word of promise, that His sheep shall know His voice, and that His hearkening and obedient

children shall hear a Voice behind them saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

And now let us notice that the pillar of cloud which had entered the tabernacle did not linger there and cease to be visible externally; but it rose from the presence chamber where the Shekinah shone, and hovered above it, and then spread over the sky just as before, an external as well as an internal presence.

The difference was this. In its first stage it was an external sign only; then it became an internal presence; and then, finally, it become both internal and external, the Shekinah within and the cloud above.

So in our earlier experiences we know the Holy Ghost only at a distance, in things that happen in a providential direction, or in the Word alone; but after awhile we receive Him as an inward Guest, and He dwells in our very midst, and He speaks to us in the innermost chambers of our being. The external working of His power does not cease, but it is increased and seems the more glorious. The Power that dwells within us works without us, answering prayer, healing sickness, overruling providences, "Doing exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us."

There is a double presence of the Lord for the consecrated believer. He is present in the heart, and He is mightily present in the events of life. He is the Christ in us, the Christ of all the days, with all power in heaven and earth.

As that pillar led them all the way, triumphing over their enemies, dividing the waters of the Jordan, and never leaving them until they entered the promised land, so the Holy Ghost is our Wonder-worker, our all sufficient God and Guardian. He is waiting in these days to work as mightily in the affairs of men as in the days of Moses, of Daniel, and of Paul.

10. It will be noticed, however, that after they entered the Land of Promise, all the external manifestations of God's presence disappeared, and the vision that came to Joshua in front of Jericho—the Son of God with a drawn sword in His hand—became henceforth a pledge of the same presence, protection, and power. Henceforth, the external sign was withdrawn, and their Leader was to be with them by faith and not by sight.

In like manner, when we come into the fullness of Christ, we have fewer signs, we have less of the wonderful in form; but we have more of the working of faith and power.

God showed Himself to Joshua, not by the luminous cloud, but by the falling of the walls of Jericho, by the defeat of the Canaanites at Beth-horan, by the capture of Hebron, by the conquest of the Anakim, and by the subjugation of all the thirty-one kings of Canaan. These were the wonders of His power and the signals of His presence.

Thus God, as He leads us into a deeper life of faith and power, will show to us His mind, and manifest His presence by the things He does every day through us, by the salvation of souls around us, by the breaking of proud and sinful hearts, by the opening of heathen nations to the Gospel, by the working of His providence in the events of our time, by the evangelization of the world, by these mighty overturnings which are to bring the glorious advent of His Son.

But in all this, the blessing will be given to faith, and not to sight. We must learn to trust the Holy Ghost, even when we cannot perceive the signals of His presence.

In conclusion; have we kept pace with this advancing cloud? Have we followed Him from Egypt down into the depths of the Red Sea and the floods of the Jordan? Have we let Him lead us into the Promised Land? Has He come to be our holy Guest, our indwell-

ing Presence? Have we proved His mighty works with us as well as in us, and has He led us out into victories of faith and service for which His own heart is longing, that He may glorify Jesus and hasten His return? Shall we not send up the prayer:

Holy Ghost I bid Thee welcome,
Come and be my holy Guest;
Heavenly Dove, within my bosom
Make Thy home, and build Thy nest.

CHAPTER V.

THE LIVING WATER.

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."—I Cor. 10: 4.

"Having therefore, brethern, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."—Hebrews 10: 19-22.

THERE is no emblem of the Holy Spirit more frequently used in the Scriptures than water. Naturally suggestive of cleansing, refreshing, and fullness, it expresses most perfectly the most important offices of the Holy Ghost.

It is not possible for us to refer to all the passages and incidents which are based upon this figure; but we shall call attention to four remarkable passages which unfold in logical and chronological order the work of the Holy Spirit in our redemption and complete salvation.

I.

The first of these passages, quoted above, refers to the first three of these unfoldings of the Holy Spirit. They are all connected with incidents in the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness.

The first is the smiting of the rock in Horeb, of which we read in the seventeenth chapter of Exodus. They had come to the fountain at Meribah, but found it dry; and, as usual, instead of trusting and praying, they began to murmur and complain. Then God commanded Moses to lead them to the rock in Horeb, and to smite it with the

rod wherewith he had divided the Red Sea and performed the miracles of judgment in Egypt. The cleft rock gave forth a flood of water, and the people drank abundantly, and their cattle.

The smiting of the rock in Horeb was, of course, a type of the Lord Jesus Christ and the stroke of the Father's judgment on Calvary by which our guilt was expiated and the fountain of mercy was opened for sinful men. But the water which flowed from that rock was also a type of the Holy Spirit, purchased for us as the most precious gift of His redemption.

Water is always a type of the Holy Ghost. Jesus, Himself, has explained the symbol in John 7:38-39, where, after speaking of the living water which was to flow from the believer, he added, "This He spake of the Holy Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive."

The water from the rock in Horeb was the type of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, in consequence of Christ's accomplished redemption. This is its dispensational meaning. So far as the successive eras of our Christian life are concerned, it prefigures our first experiences of the Holy Spirit after our conversion.

There is a very real sense in which the Spirit of God is given to the believer as soon as he accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. There is a deeper fullness which follows at a later stage. But let not that discredit nor displace the other real experience in which He comes to the believer, in so far as the heart is open to receive Him. This was the first promise to the infant church and the youngest believers of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord, our God, shall call." This is the only security for the establishing and standing of any believers; and no convert should be left

until he has definitely received the Holy Spirit, and been sealed unto the day of redemption by the indwelling power and the presence of God.

II.

In the twentieth chapter of Numbers we have a second incident very similar to the first and yet essentially different. Again the people come to the place of extremity. They are without water and ready to perish from thirst. Once again, God interposes for their deliverance. Once again, He leads them to the rock and the waters flow in abundance for the supply of all their need, "and the people drink, and their cattle," and they are refreshed and satisfied. All this seems exactly like the other miracle, but when we look a little closer we find important differences.

In the first place, it is forty years later in their history. The first miracle was at the beginning of their wilderness life. This is near its close, and is intended, therefore, to mark some advanced stage in their experience.

It is at a different place—Kadesh. The word "Kadesh" means holiness, and we know that Kadesh was the gate to the Promised Land. This, therefore, would suggest that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit here set forth has reference to the more advanced stages of our Christian life. There is an era in every complete Christian life; there is a Kadesh where God brings us into His holiness and gives to us the Spirit to dwell within us, and causes us to walk in His statutes and keep His judgments and do them; there is a promised land whose gateway lies at Kadesh, into which we enter by receiving the Holy Ghost in His fullness. There is a place where we either pass out of the wilderness into the "rest that remaineth for the people of God," or where we pass on to the ceaseless round of failure and disappointment in which so many are living.

There is an infinite difference between this reception of the Holy Spirit and His coming to us at our conversion. There He comes to witness to our acceptance and forgiveness; here He comes to accept our perfect offering of ourselves to Him, and to possess us fully for Himself, bringing us into personal union with Jesus, and keeping us henceforth in obedience and victory.

Again, it will be noticed that the manner of the miracle was entirely different. In the first instance, the rock was to be struck by the rod of the law-giver, but in this case it was not to be struck. Moses was simply to speak to it, and it would give forth its waters at the quiet voice of faith and prayer. Moses disobeyed this command and vehemently struck the rock repeatedly. "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch water out of the rock?" God, displeased with his haste and unbelief, severely punished him by excluding him from the Promised Land; yet He honored His own promise by giving the water to the people, notwithstanding the failure of Moses.

All this action is exceedingly significant. The rock was not to be struck again, because it was already smitten and opened, and the waters were already flowing freely. All that was needed was to receive by faith what had already been secured by the great sacrifice. And so for us, the Holy Ghost is given, the sacrifice is finished, the price is paid, the conditions are fulfilled, the heavens are opened, and the Holy Ghost has come.

Let us not crucify Christ afresh, or ignore the value of His death by trying to bring down the Spirit again from heaven. All we have to do is to simply receive Him and make room for His entrance. Our part is not to strike but to speak to the Rock, and, as we come in the simplicity of trust, quietly, expectantly claim His entering in; more willingly than a father would give good gifts to his children, will the Father on high bestow the Holy Spirit on them that ask Him. Not like the priests

of Baal, with noisy clamor and unbelieving repetitions are we to ask for Him, but in unhesitating confidence and full assurance of faith are we to come and receive what He is waiting to bestow.

The bells within the innermost shrine of God's holy dwelling-place are very delicately hung, and a rude touch will jar the exquisite wires and break the delicate mechanism. All you need is the lightest touch. In the days of your childhood, you got access to a building by pounding on the door with a rude knocker; but now you come and softly touch a little button, and the electric current signals to the highest storey your approach. God's bells all move in answer to electric wires, and your rude, clumsy blows only hinder your petition.

The Holy Ghost is very sensitive, as love always is. You can conquer a wild beast by blows and chains, but you cannot conquer a woman's heart that way, or win the love of a sensitive nature. That must be wooed by the delicate touches of trust and affection. So the Holy Ghost has to be taken by a faith as delicate and sensitive as the gentle heart with whom it is coming in touch. One thought of unbelief, one expression of impatient distrust or fear, will instantly check the perfect freedom of His operations as much as a breath of frost would wither the petals of the most sensitive rose or lily.

Speak to the Rock, do not strike it. Believe in the Holy Ghost and treat Him with the tenderest confidence and the most unwavering trust, and He will meet you with instant response and equal confidence.

Beloved, have you come to the rock in Kadesh? Have you opened all your being to the fullness of the Spirit? And then, with the confidence of the child to the mother, the bride to the husband, the flower to the sunshine, have you received by faith? And are you drinking of the fullness and dwelling in the innermost centre of His blessed life?

III.

We come to the third stage in the following chapter, Numbers 21. We have a very striking little picture: "And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.

"Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it;

"The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah."

At first sight the meaning is a little obscure, but as we look more closely, we see a very striking picture. The people have passed on from Kadesh, and again the parched desert is all around them. There are no oases, rills, or flowing streams in sight, and they are famishing with thirst. Then comes the divine command: "Gather the people that I may give them water." "Where shall they be gathered? Gathered to the well of Beer. Oh! there is no well in sight." Never mind, gather them all the same. Right there in the desert sand, bring them together."

Now the command is given to the nobles to bring out their pilgrim staves and to dig the well in the desert sand; and while they dig, the people are gathered around and are commanded to sing. And so they dig and sing, and sing and dig, and their song is given us in this simple refrain: "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it." As they sang, the waters burst forth from the depths, and overflowed and ran like a river through the camp; and the people drank and sang and wondered.

This is the explanation of that strange expression in the text, "They drank of that rock that followed them." This is the way it followed them. The rock did not travel

through the desert behind the camp, nor was it carried about with them in their caravan, like some fetish or car of Juggernaut; but the *water* of the rock followed them. It ran under the desert sands, a subterranean stream. They could not see it on the surface, but it was there all the same. All they needed to do was to gather above it, and with their staves dig the well and sing the song of faith and prayer, and lo! the waters flowed abundantly.

What a beautiful picture of the abiding life in the Spirit, and of the continuous sources of our spiritual life! When we receive the fullness of the Spirit, the same blessed promise of life and salvation continues to follow us through all our wilderness journey. Not always will we see the water, or be able to trace the channel of the river; but it is there beneath our feet, even under the fiery sun and burning sands of the hottest desert, and all we need to do is to dig the well of need with the staff of promise, then sing the song of trust, and the Holy Spirit will be found springing up, as ever, in His infinite supply for all our need.

Every promise in the Bible has some fitness to some need in our life. As we use the promise faithfully and meet its simple conditions, we shall find that the waters will spring and our wants will be supplied from the Fountain of Life.

To dig is not always very pleasant work. There is a good deal of excavation, and room has to be made by scooping out the sand; and so the promises of God have their sharp edges as well as their gracious fullness. They empty us as well as fill us; but as we meet the conditions, we shall always find them faithful and full, "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

This striking figure of the desert well teaches us the secret of abiding in the Spirit. Our deeper life in Christ is not always apparent even to ourselves, for it is hid with Christ in God; but the fountain is always there,

and we may ever drink from its hidden depths and find the supply of every need in Him.

IV.

There is another figure of the Holy Spirit suggested by the passage quoted from the Hebrews. There we see the worshipper entering into the Holy of Holies with his body washed with pure water. This suggests the ancient laver which stood at the entrance of the tabernacle, and was intended for the use of the priests who went within to wash their faces and their hands and cleanse their robes from every spot and stain whenever they entered the holy precincts. It was made out of the looking-glasses of the women of Israel, and it is probable that externally it was a great polished mirror in which they could see themselves and their defilements. Then in the water they could cleanse away the stains.

This laver was the type of the Holy Spirit as our fountain of cleansing and our way of approach to the holy place of Christ's immediate presence. Only as we are cleansed in that laver can we enter in as the priests of God and feed upon the Living Bread, dwelling in the light of the golden lamps, and breathing the sweet odor of the incense that fills the presence chamber with the atmosphere of heaven. At once it reveals and removes the defilements of our hearts and lives. There is a sense in which, once for all, the Holy Spirit cleanses us. This was what our Master meant when He said, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."

But there is a constant liability to contract at least the stains of earth, if not the taint of sin. The very atmosphere we breathe is so laden with the breath of evil that it is almost impossible to escape its touch and taint; but the blessed Holy Spirit stands ministering within the sacred temple of the heart, and is ready every

moment to wash away the faintest touch of earth or evil, and to keep us spotless, undefiled, and perfectly accepted in His sight.

"If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." The laver speaks to us of the permanent and unceasing operations of the Holy Spirit. The rock in Horeb and Kadesh, and even the well in the wilderness, were but the transient types of these spiritual verities. But the laver was God's abiding symbol, and continued in the tabernacle through all their future national life. It speaks to us of that continual provision which He has made for our abiding life. Let us, therefore, receive Him and abide in Him; let us wait in the Holy Place; let us not only come for cleansing, but let us keep coming; and let us so dwell under the continual influences and in the very atmosphere of His love that we shall never be out of communion, and that we shall be kept cleansed from all sin.

We read, in the description of the tabernacle, not only of the laver but also of its foot. What was the intention of the foot of the laver? Perhaps it was a little outlet through which the waters could more easily flow within the reach of one who sought cleansing. The laver itself was too high to be easily reached, at least at its brim; but through this little pipe, which probably could be opened by a simple mechanism, the waters flowed to the ground and were always within the reach of even the littlest child, had it needed to come.

How truly this illustrates the blessed nearness of the Holy Ghost! Not in the highest heaven do we need to seek Him, not afar off do we have to cry to Him; but He is our Paraclete, One by our side, One very near and ever near to help in time of need. He is to us the presence of the Holy God, already given and ever present in the heart of His Church. He is as ready to enter the yielded and trusting heart as light is to flow into the

open window and sunshine to meet the petals of the opening flower.

Let us send up to Him the simple, whole-hearted prayer,

Blessed Holy Spirit
Welcome to my breast;
In my heart forever
Be my Holy Guest.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ANOINTING OIL.

"Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God."—2 Cor. 1: 21.

THE use of oil is more common in eastern lands than it is with us. The olive tree is one of the typical trees of Palestine. It is a wonderful tree. Its leaf is lustrous and seems always as if it had been bathed in the oil of its own olive tree, and the tree itself seems almost indestructible. It is usually crooked, gnarled, twisted, and almost torn to pieces. Nearly every tree is hollow, and often you see the larger part of the trunk apparently torn away, with perhaps a single root adhering to the soil; but above it rises a luxuriant mass of boughs and foliage seeming to be imbued with imperishable freshness. Some of the olives of Gethsemane must be at least a thousand years old; indeed the olive tree seems as if it could scarcely die.

It is a good type of the Holy Spirit and the soul anointed with His life and power. He may be exposed to all the trials of time; but, filled with the elixir of imperishable life, his leaf is always green, and he shall not cease from yielding fruit even in the parched land and the most inhospitable climate.

The ordinance of anointing with oil was one of the most common and significant ceremonials of the Old Testament. The leper was anointed, the tabernacle was anointed, the priests were anointed, the prophets were anointed, the kings were anointed, the guest was anointed, the sick were anointed. It was the special symbol of the Holy Ghost and the dedication of the person anointed to His service and possession.

I.

THE PREPARATION OF THE ANOINTING OIL.

We have a full acount of this in Exodus 30:23-33. "Take thou unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calumus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin: and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office."

The method was particularly prescribed in every detail, and no counterfeit was allowed under the most severe penalties.

It will be noticed:

1. That this oil was specially prepared. It was not ordinary olive oil; but other ingredients were added, chiefly perfumes, making it exquisitely fragrant, so that it not only was visible to the eye, but expressed to the sense of smell the sweetest suggestions of the divine presence, of which fragrance was always a peculiar sign.

The Holy Ghost has been prepared in like manner for His special work in us, just as the body of Jesus was prepared and His incarnation arranged for, so that He might come to us, not as the pure Deity alone, but as God manifest in the flesh. So the Holy Ghost has been prepared to dwell within us and to bring us into the

presence of God in the way best adapted to our weak human nature.

The Holy Ghost who dwells in the believer is not the Deity who comes directly from the throne in the majesty of His Godhead. He is the Spirit that dwelt in the human Christ for three and a half years, the Spirit who wept in His tears, suffered in his agonies, spake in His words of wisdom and love, took the little children in His arms, healed the sick and raised the dead, allowed John to lean upon His bosom, and said to the sorrowing disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled." This is the Spirit, therefore, that comes to us, softened and humanized by His union with the blessed Jesus, and calling Himself the Spirit of Christ, so that in receiving Him we receive the heart of Jesus and the person of Jesus into our inmost being.

How gracious of the Holy Ghost to come to us thus fitted to meet our frailty and our need and to satisfy the wants of all our being!

2. As the oil was fragrant and sweet, so the Holy Ghost brings to us the very sweetness of heaven. All these spices have, perhaps, some special significance. The myrrh used, as we know, for embalming the dead, suggests to us the comfort of the Holy Ghost; the cinnamon was sweet to the taste, and fitly expresses the delightful and joyful influences of the Spirit; and the cassia, a healing and wholesome ingredient, reminds us of the Holy Ghost as our Health Bringer and our Sanctifier.

3. The oil was not to be counterfeited or imitated. Neither can the Holy Ghost be imitated. Satan has always tried to stimulate the Spirit of God, and to get us to worship him instead of Jehovah. Even in the days of Moses men sometimes brought strange fire; but they were met with fiery judgment from the jealous God, who will not suffer His holy things to be profaned or confounded with evil. Men are still constantly in

danger of accepting the false for the true. Spiritualism, Christian Science, and Theosophy come with their unholy imitations, but no deep discernment is needed to detect their disguises. He would be a bold man who willingly would be mixed up with these sorceries and Satanic delusions which leave a blister and a scar wherever they touch the soul.

There are other counterfeits less glaring and daring. Intellectual brilliancy, eloquence, and pathos often presume to imitate the operations of the Spirit and produce the impression which only He can bring. Music attempts to thrill our æsthetic nature with the emotions and feelings which many mistake for real devotion. Architecture and art are called into play to impress the imagination with the scenic effects of senuous worship. But none of these do the work of the Holy Spirit. People can weep under entrancing music and heart-stirring eloquence, and yet as much as before go out and live lives of cruel selfishness and gross unrighteousness. People can bow with a kind of awe under the imposing arch and before the vivid painting, or the impressive pageant of ceremonial worship, and yet have no fear of God before their eyes. There is no substitute for the Holy Ghost. He alone can produce conviction, divine impression, true devotion, unselfish life, and reverent worship.

4. The oil must not be poured on man's flesh. It was to be used exclusively for the consecrated and separated ones. No stranger was to receive this anointing. It was the badge of separation to God. Thus the Holy Ghost comes upon the separated, dedicated, consecrated heart. You cannot receive it upon a carnal and fleshly soul. God will not dwell in a sinful spirit. You must separate yourself from evil, dedicate yourself to Him, and be crucified with Christ to self and sin before He will make your heart His abiding place. His promise is: "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh,

and a new spirit will I put within you." Then he adds, "I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."

You cannot get power from God until you receive holiness. Simon Magus wanted this power from the Apostle Peter; but his wicked heart received only God's terrific rebuke and the awful words, "Thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Men are still trying to get power without holiness, but it can only bring disappointment and danger. In their search for power they will probably end where Simon Magus did, with the unholy power of the wicked one and the curse of a holy God.

The Spirit's first work is to cleanse us, to separate us, to sanctify us, to dedicate us wholly to God. Then as the property of God, He takes possession of us for God and uses us for His service and glory alone.

II.

PARTICULAR CASES IN WHICH THE ANOINTING OIL WAS USED.

1. The anointing of the leper is described in Leviticus 14. This represents the Holy Spirit's cleansing and consecrating work upon the sinner. This poor leper outside the camp represents our worst estate, and it is for such sinners that the Holy Ghost has come to bring all the fullness of Jesus.

First, the poor leper must be met and welcomed, and then brought by the priest inside the camp and under the cleansing water and sprinkled blood; then the anointing oil is applied, and he is touched over the blood-mark that has already been given, upon his right ear, his right thumb, and his right toe. This means the consecrating and the filling of all his powers of apprehension and reception represented by the ear, all his

powers of appropriating faith and holy service represented by the hand, and all his steppings and ways represented by his feet. All these are dedicated to God and taken possession of by the Holy Ghost.

The oil does not come first, but the blood. Then the oil is placed upon the blood. The Holy Ghost comes only to those who have received Jesus. There is no spiritual power apart from the cross and the Saviour. Those higher revelations and deeper teachings which discard the blood of Calvary come from beneath. Like the ancient St. Francis, we can always know the true Christ by the print of the nails and the spear. However, we need the oil as much as the blood. Our ears, our hands, and our feet must be divinely quickened, possessed, and filled before we can rightly hear and understand for God, rightly appropriate the things we know, rightly work for Him, and walk in His holy ways.

But this is not all. This is but a drop of oil. We now read that the remnant of the oil was poured upon the head of him who was to be cleansed. This is a much larger filling. The very word "pour" means a fullness of blessing, and the remnant of oil means all the oil that was left, all that was in the priest's hand. We know that the priest is no one else than the Son of God, the Mighty One, who holds the ocean in the hollow of His hand, and, therefore, the rest of the oil that the palm of His hand can hold is an ocean of infinite fullness. It means that all the oil, that Jesus Himself had, is poured upon our head. The same anointing came upon Him that He also shares with us. All this for a poor leper!

Beloved, have you received the remnant of the oil?

2. The anointing of the priest is unfolded in Exodus 29:7-21, and Leviticus 8:12, 30. Here we find a different application of the oil. It is applied to the priest with the object of fitting him for service in waiting

upon the Lord and ministering in His presence. We also must receive the holy anointing, not only for cleansing but for service. We are not fit to represent God in the world or to do any spiritual work for Him until we receive the Holy Ghost.

You will notice a double operation here in connection with the oil. First, Aaron is anointed, and then afterwards his sons are anointed with him. Aaron is anointed alone, even as Christ received the baptism of the Holy Ghost first upon Himself on the banks of the Jordan; and then later He shed the same spirit upon His diciples. Even as He, we may receive this divine anointing. The oil that falls on Aaron's head goes down to the skirts of his garment. The Spirit that was upon Him He shed upon His followers. Standing in their midst, He breathes upon them and says unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and then He explains the great enduement and the great commission by the strange and mighty words, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

This is our true preparation for the highest of all priestly ministries, for prayer, and for every other service in which we would represent God or bless men. Even the Master did not venture to go forth to fulfill His great commission until He could stand before the world and say, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, ... to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." For any man to presume to represent the Son of God, to stand between the living and the dead, to act as ambassador for Christ, to bear salvation to dying men, to bring men from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God without the anointing of the Holy Ghost, is the most daring presumption and the most offensive impertinence

to the God whom he misrepresents and to the men on whom he imposes.

3. The anointing of the tabernacle represents something higher than even cleansing or service; namely, the indwelling and abiding presence of God Himself in the believer, as His consecrated temple. We read the full account of it in Exodus 40:9-16. As we have seen in a former chapter, it is a great day; it marks a special era in their national history. It was on the first day of the first month of the second year. It marked a new departure and a higher experience. The glory that had hitherto marched in front of them or shone above them in the cloud or on the mountain, was henceforth to be brought into their very midst in the Holy of Holies. But before that presence could come and dwell among them, that tabernacle, that was to be its shrine and home, must be completed according to the divine commandment in every part, and then presented to God in the solemn ordinance of anointing.

It was definitely laid at the feet of Jehovah, and the sacred oil was poured upon it, as a symbol that God God Himself now took possession of the sacred edifice and was to make it henceforth His personal abode. Then the cloud descended and the tabernacle became the very throne of the divine presence.

And so, when we present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," we become the sacred abode of the Holy One. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transfigured, is the apostle's inspiring message to such consecrated lives. Life henceforth becomes a transfiguration and we go forth shining like the Master, with the glory of the inward presence which the world cannot understand, but which the angels perceive, and which makes the consecrated heart the house of God and the very gate of heaven. Beloved, have we come to this also? Have we reached the glory of this mystery, which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory"?

Ancient minds in heathen lands dreamed of something like this, when they cut in marble their ideals of beauty and grace and then called them gods. It was the dream of the human heart, trying to bring God down in union with man. But Jesus has accomplished it through His incarnation in our image and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, the incarnation of the Father in Jesus and the incarnation of Jesus in us by the Holy Ghost.

This is the climax; this is the consummation; this is the crowning glory of redemption; and all that which is now being realized in the individual, shall yet, some glorious day, be gathered together into the whole number of glorified and transfigured ones. Then when the whole Church of Christ shall meet and the body shall be complete, and the building shall be crowned with the glorious headstone, then the universe shall look upon a spectacle for which all ages have been preparing, the infinite and eternal God, enshrined in glorified humanity. And the heavens shall cry, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

There are three or four other instances of anointing, to which we shall briefly refer, inasmuch as they will be considered more fully in a later chapter.

4. The ancient prophets were anointed. Thus Elisha was called to his high office. And thus we are called and qualified by the Holy Ghost to present the will of God, to bear the Word of God to our fellowmen.

5. Kings were anointed, as David was set apart by the anointing oil to be God's chosen king. Likewise we are anointed kings and priests unto Him—a royal priesthood of love and victorious life, to bear upon our brow the majesty of the saints of God as the joint heirs with Christ in His coming kingdom.

6. The sick were anointed for healing. The Holy

Ghost becomes to us the quickening and health-bringing power, who imparts the life of Jesus to our mortal frames, expelling disease and bringing us into the divine and resurrection life of the Son of God.

7. Guests were anointed. We read in the twenty-third Psalm the beautiful picture of the guest sitting at the table of the royal banquet and exclaiming, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." We find Jesus complaining to the Pharisee, "My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet."

The ancient host received his guest with great courtesy and took him into the bathroom, where the stains of the wayside were washed away, where fresh garments were put upon him. Then sweet and fragrant oil was poured upon his head.

So the blessed Holy Ghost not only becomes our guest; but He turns around and makes us as guests, and then anoints us with the sweet, fragrant oil and feeds us with the heavenly banquet of His love.

A missionary of the Northwest tells us that once in a while he and his wife used to visit the Indians and have a little feast with them in their homes. The missionary's wife would tell the Indian mother on Sabbath at the little chapel to be ready for her on a certain day that week, and to prepare her best for dinner. The poor squaw perhaps would answer that she had nothing worthy of the missionary save a little fish. But the missionary would tell her to prepare what she had and to have everything clean and bright, and it would be all right. So on the appointed day the missionary would arrive, and she would take from her dog-sleigh bundle after bundle of things. There were tea and coffee, there were sugar and bread, there were potatoes, and perhaps butter and little delicacies that that poor savage never had seen before. When all was ready the missionary

husband would arrive in another dog-sleigh from visiting the stations, and then the feast would begin, and they would dine together. The missionary and his wife were the real host and hostess, and the poor Indian family ate of things that day that they had never tasted before; and the missionaries found their joy in the joy which they brought.

Ah, that is the way that our precious Lord loves to do with us. We take Him into our humble home, and we give Him our best, although it is very poor at the best, and He condescends to accept it; and then He brings His best—all that heaven affords—and He feeds us out of His bounty, and it is true, as He promised, "I will sup with him and he will sup with me." He takes what we have to give, but He brings His richer gifts to us; and as we sit at His table and feast upon His love we say with the Psalmist, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BAPTISM WITH FIRE.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."—Matthew 3: 11. "For our God is a consuming fire."—Hebrews 12: 29.

FIRE is one of the most powerful and striking elements of the material world. It has always been an object of importance and of superstitious regard in the religious ideas and customs of all nations. In ancient Greece and Rome the sacred fire was guarded by consecrated priests and vestal virgins, and was the centre of the commonwealth and the home. When the fire went out, all executive and national affairs were suspended, and it had to be rekindled, either from the lightnings of the skies, from the concentrated rays of the sun, or by the process of friction and the rubbing together of two pieces of wood.

The foreign ambassador had to walk by the holy fire before he could be received in the Council of State. The Slavonic and Teutonic bride had to bow before the holy fire as she entered her new home. The Red Indian sachem walked thrice around the camp-fire before he would give his counsel or confer with his public visitor. The twelve Grecian tribes brought their twelve firebrands to Theseus, and were thus consolidated into the State, and their sacred fires were combined in the Oracle of Delphi.

The Persian fire-worshippers looked upon the sun and the flame as sacred things, and it was an unpardonable profanity to spit in the fire or commit any impropriety in the presence of these holy elements.

Fire was recognized as identical with life, and the Parsees of India today worship it with holy veneration.

God had always recognized it in His Word, not as an object of superstitious regard, but as the symbol of His own transcendent glory, and the power of His presence and His Holy Spirit.

As the discoveries of science and the progress of human knowledge increase, we learn to trace the deeper analogies and more significant lessons in this sacred symbolism.

Fire is the most valuable physical force with which we are acquainted. In yonder sun it is the centre of power in our whole planetary system. Stored up in our vast coal-mines, it is the power that drives the engines of commerce and the wheels of industry throughout the world. We see it in the tremendous forces of modern artillery, the torpedo, the bomb, the dynamite, the nitroglycerine, and the death-dealing cannon. It is the prime factor in all the implements of modern warfare.

In the still higher forces of electricity, with their countless and ever-increasing adaptations, it is revolutionizing all the methods of modern business, and directing the whole course of trade and labor. Science is beginning to believe that the ultimate force of all nature is just electricity, and that the power that moves the planets in their orbits and the stars in their courses is but a form of electric fire. The truth is, that when they get to the end of their ultimatum they will find that God Himself is there, the personal source of all these forces, and by His own will directing this tremendous battery by which the universe is kept in motion. For "power belongeth unto God." and He is the "Consuming Fire" from whose bosom all other forces emanate.

The Holy Ghost Himself has taught us to recognize in this tremendous force His own appropriate symbol, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

There is something very striking in the analogy between the story of fire and the dispensational unfolding

of the Holy Ghost. There was a time in the history of the natural world when yonder celestial fires were the objects of mystery, uncertainty, and almost dread. The lightnings of the skies were known to be real forces, but men knew not when they would strike, and dared not attempt to use or control them. But in these last days science has scaled the heavens, has caught the lightnings, and has brought the tremendous forces of electricity under the direction of such laws that the simplest child can use them at pleasure. They have become the instruments of our every-day life, ringing our front door-bells, driving our street-cars, lighting our chambers and our streets, moving our machinery, carrying on our business, and even conveying our messages on the phonographic and telegraphic wires over the world.

So, in like manner, there was a time when the Holy Ghost's heavenly fire was a mysterious force, flashing, like the lightning in the skies, we knew not why or whither; coming now upon a Moses, and again upon an Elijah; sometimes falling as at Carmel, in awful majesty upon the altar of sacrifice; sometimes striking, as in Israel's camp, in the destroying flame of God's anger; sometimes appearing, as in the burning bush at Horeb, as the strange, mysterious symbol of Jehovah's presence.

But since Christ's ascension the Holy Spirit has condescended to dwell amongst us under certain plainly-revealed laws, and to place at our service and command all the forces and resources of His power, according to definite, simple and regular laws of operation, in accordance with which the simplest disciple can use Him for the needs of his life and work just as easily as we use the force of electricity for the business of life. He has even been pleased to call Himself "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

He has come down to the level of our common life, and is ready to meet us in every need of our being, and to become to us, not only the Author of our higher

spiritual life, but the Director and power of our daily conduct, and of all our work here, whether in the secular or the spiritual sphere.

Let us first look at some of the illustrations of this figure in the Scriptures, especially the use of fire in the Mosaic ritual.

At the very beginning of the Exodus we find God revealing Himself to Moses under the symbol of the burning bush, the tree that burned but was not consumed, thus making the emblem of fire the special symbol of His presence with Israel.

The pillar of cloud and fire was but a grander manifestation of the same glorious emblem. As in the vision of Abraham, centuries before, the symbol of the divine presence that appeared in the night vision given to the patriarch, was a burning lamp and a smoking furnace, so all through the wilderness it was by fire that God manifested His presence. In Mount Sinai He descended in fire and spake to the people from the midst of the fire. The Shekinah glory in the midst of the Holy of Holies was probably a glowing flame of fire. It was by fire that He answered the prayer of Elijah on Mount Carmel, accepted the sacrifice of Samson's parents, and revealed His presence in times past to His servants.

In all the sacrifices and offerings fire was an important element. The paschal lamb was roasted in the fire and eaten by the people as a symbol of Christ's flesh prepared for us and ministered to us by the Holy Ghost as our Living Bread.

The sin offering was carried without the camp and burned with fire, as a symbol of our sin laid upon Jesus and consumed by the Holy Ghost outside the pale of our consciousness, so that we have nothing more to do with it, but simply to lay it on the Lamb of God and leave it with Him.

The burnt offering was consumed upon the altar by fire, the type of Christ, offered not for our sins, but

for our acceptance with God, and the type of our true consecration as we yield ourselves up to God by the Holy Ghost.

As the fire was kept ever burning, so the Holy Ghost in the consecrated soul will make our whole life a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.

The peace offering was also connected with the sacred fire. It was the type of our communion with God. In this sacrifice the fat and the inwards were given to God, and consumed upon the altar by the fire. This was the type of God's part in the communion of the believer. Then the shoulder and breast were given to the priest and eaten by him, a symbol of our part in this holy communion. But it is the Holy Ghost alone that can maintain the true fellowship of the peace offering, and enable us first to give to God the worship and homage due to Him, and then to take our part and feed upon Christ as our Living Bread.

Next, the meat offering was an offering by fire. It was fine flour baked in the fire, mingled with oil and frankincense, and free from leaven and honey. It was the type of Jesus Christ, our spiritual sustenance, nourishing and feeding us with His own life by the fire of the Holy Ghost.

It is one thing to feed upon the truth; it is another thing to feed upon Christ. Only the Spirit of God can make even the life of Christ our Living Bread. The difference is just the same as if you should attempt to feed upon raw wheat instead of prepared bread. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to prepare for us the Bread of Life, and to minister it to us as the Living Christ.

One of the most beautiful of all the offerings was the incense presented in the holy place. This also was an offering by fire. The sweet spices were ground and mixed, some of them beaten very small; and then they were burned in the golden censer, and their sweet fra-

grance went up in clouds of incense before the Lord, filling all the holy place with fragrance, and breathing out the very spirit of worship continually.

This is the type of Christ's priesthood first, and then of our true ministry of prayer. Like the incense beaten small, it may have to do with the most trifling things. Like the spices, whose very names we do not now understand, and whose nature is unknown, except the frankincense, so in all prayer there is much of mystery, and much that even the praying heart does not fully comprehend. And yet, like the frankincense, which was well known, there are ingredients and elements in prayer of which we do know, and things for which we ask of which we are definitely aware, and for which we may definite believe.

But above all, the fire which consumed the incense is the type of the Holy Ghost, without whom all our prayers must stop short of heaven, and through whom alone our desires can reach the throne and become effectual with God.

There is no deeper experience in the Christian life than this ministry of prayer in the Spirit. "For we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Again, we see the use of the fire in the ordinance of the red heifer. This type was especially for God's people in their wilderness life. The red heifer represented Christ our Sacrifice, slain and consumed for us on the altar of God. But in the burning of the heifer there come the scarlet wool, the cedar and the hyssop leaves, representing something which is to be consumed, along with the death of Christ.

The scarlet wool represents our sins, the cedar our

strength, and the hyssop our weakness and the clinging element in our nature.

All these things are to be crucified with Christ, and this can be done only through the power of the Holy Ghost. We are not equal to the task of self-crucifixion, but we can hand over anything and everything to Him, and consent that it shall die. Then by the power of His Holy Spirit He will put it to death and make the crucifixion real.

Even after the death of the heifer the fire was to be preserved and made perpetual by the preservation of the ashes. You know ashes are a kind of preserved fire. By pouring water upon these ashes you create lye, a very acrid, pungent, burning substance. Now, these ashes were preserved and water poured upon them, and used as a water of separation or purification when any one had contracted any sin or defilement whatsoever.

It was the type of the work of the Holy Spirit in constantly cleansing us from defilement or pollution contracted from earthly things and absorbed from the atmosphere in which we live.

This cleansing is not always pleasant. It is sometimes like the touch of lye, a consuming fire; but it is a wholesome thing, like the burning away of proud flesh by caustic, to have our very nature purified for us from self and sin.

It is blessed to be able thus to come in every moment of defilement, and to walk in the constant cleansing of the Holy Spirit, knowing that we are not only cleansed but kept clean, ever acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and ready for constant fellowship and holy service as He may require.

We find the fire manifested in a very remarkable way in connection with Elijah's history. On Mt. Carmel the fire came from heaven as a special sign of God's acceptance of the sacrifice and the manifestation of His

power to His returning people. As it fell upon the altar it not only consumed the sacrifice, but it licked up the water in trenches. To complete the faith of the people in Jehovah, He made the miracle as difficult as possible by covering the altar and filling the trenches round about with floods of water, so that deception was impossible.

God met the faith of His servant, and wrought a work so glorious and divine that it was manifest to every eye that it was the finger of God; and the great multitude sent up the cry, "Jehovah, He is God! Jehovah, He is God!"

The Holy Ghost is thus the power of God in our work, the fire that all the devil's floods cannot extinguish, the fire that delights in the hardest places and the most difficult undertakings.

We need not fear to claim this power for even the impossible, but may boldly bring to God the mightiest difficulties, and glorify Him all the more in the face of Satan's fiercest and most formidable opposition.

Once more, we see the fire as the emblem of destruction. When the presuming priests dared to offer strange fire before the Lord, then God's consuming fire fell upon them and destroyed them.

And so the Holy Ghost is still present as God's avenging power. He that struck down Ananias and Sapphira in their presumption and hypocrisy, is still present in the Church as the Executive of Jehovah, and the "consuming fire," to whom we can safely leave all our enemies and all the hate of earth and hell.

There are several lessons which we may learn from the figure itself.

Fire is a cleansing element. It differs from water in this, that, while water cleanses externally, fire purifies internally and intrinsically, penetrating to the very substance of things, and filling every fibre and particle of matter with its own element.

The baptism of John represented the cleansing of our life and conduct, the reformation of our character, and the work of the law and the truth upon human hearts. But Christ's baptism was by fire, and went to the roots of conduct. The purity He required included motives, aims, and "the thoughts and intents of the heart." He not only requires but He gives the purity that springs from the depths of our being. Like the flame that consumes the dross and leaves the molten metal pure and unalloyed, so the Holy Ghost separates us from our old sinful and self-like and burns into us the nature and the life of Christ.

Again, fire quickens and gives life. The returning spring and the solar heat call into life the buried seeds of field and garden, and all nature springs into beauty and fruitfulness. The heated greenhouse germinates the seeds and plants of the gardener and pushes them forward into rapid and luxuriant growth. The process of heat incubates the little birdling in its shell and nurses it into life.

So the Holy Ghost is the quickener of life. We are born again by the Spirit, nursed into spiritual being, and cherished into growth and maturity, by the Spirit of God.

Again, the Holy Spirit warms and quickens the heart into love. Like the change from the cold winter to the vernal sunshine of the spring is the transition which He brings into the heart. It is His mission to break the fetters of fear and sorrow, and to kindle in the heart the love of Christ and the joy of heaven, warming every affection of the new nature, and shedding abroad the love of God in the soul until it becomes a summerland of love.

And, finally, fire is an energizing force. It gives power. So the Holy Ghost is the source of power. Surely, if He has been able to give to the forces of nature their tremendous power; to give to the sun the force

that can hold the planets in their course, and quicken and warm the earth into life and luxuriance; if He has stored up in the lightnings, and the coal-mines, and the atmosphere, the yet only half-revealed dynamics which propel the industries of the human race, He Himself is able to accomplish more than any of His agencies or works.

How blind are they who are trying to do the work of God without His power! How we would laugh at the man who today would try to turn the great driving-wheel of a factory by a treadmill, with a dozen men turning it with their weight, as they still do in China! And yet thousands of Christians are trying to carry on their Lord's work by their own puny hands.

Science has grown wise enough to turn on the forces of steam and electricity. Oh, let faith turn on the dynamo of heaven and the power of the Holy Ghost! This is the secret of victory over temptation and sin and all our spiritual enemies.

Archimedes of old was said to have consumed the vessels of the enemies of his country by setting fire to them in the harbor of Syracuse by a burning-glass, by which he attracted the solar rays in a focus upon the hostile fleet; and they went up in a blaze of destruction. So let us consume our enemies and His by the fire of the Holy Ghost.

When the little camp on the vast prairie finds that a wave of fire is sweeping over the plain, and that in and hour or two they will be engulfed in flame and destroyed by the resistless element, they are wise enough to clear an open space around them and then start another fire from their own camp and send it out to meet the approaching wave. As it rolls across the open plain, destroying every combustible thing that is in the way at length it meets the advancing fire; and the two leap up to heaven in one wild outburst of fury and then expire for the want of fuel. The

travellers are left in safety on the prairie, where there is nothing to feed the fire.

So let us meet the fire of evil with the fire of the Holy Ghost. We have divine resources. Why should we stoop to the human? We have God to fight our battles for us. Why should we do it ourselves?

In ancient Rome when the fire went out all state business had to cease. They dared not do a thing without the sacred fire. So all true work ceases when the Holy Ghost is withdrawn from the Church of God and from the midst of the work. God does not accept anything that is not done in the power of the Spirit.

In ancient Rome the fire had to be rekindled either from the lightnings of the sky, or from the sun, or from the friction of two pieces of wood. So sometimes God sends us the lightnings of his power to rekindle the flame. Although this is often a very dangerous thing, He has sometimes to strike with a stroke of judgment before His people awake to their need.

We can always draw the fire by the burning-glass of faith from the Son of Righteousness. And God has yet another way of increasing our spiritual fire, and that is by friction.

The other day, in one of our cities, I was asked to notice the factory where the electric force was generated for the trolley engines. I found it was generated entirely by friction. Great wheels were constantly revolving and producing the electric force by rubbing together.

So God in like manner often quickens our lives and deepens our spiritual force by the tests and trials which throw us upon Him, and compel us to take more of His life and strength.

Then let us, instead of quarrelling with our circumstances and mourning over our trials, use everything that comes to bring us more of God, and strengthen us for higher service and mightier usefulness, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM.

"God hath . . . given us the Spirit . . . of a sound mind."—2 Tim. 1: 7.

"Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them."—Nehemiah 9: 20.

THE latter passage suggests the work of the Holy Sprit as the teacher and guide of God's people through their history in the wilderness. The previous verses connect the passage with the history of Israel during the forty years of their wandering, and identifies the pillar of cloud and fire which led them through the wilderness with the Holy Spirit who is our Leader and Guide.

The other passage from the Epistle to Timothy presents to us the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind.

It is interesting and instructive to trace the revelation of the divine Spirit in the Old Testament, as the Spirit of wisdom and guidance. Let us look at a few special examples.

1. The first is the case of Joseph, referred to in Genesis 41: 38-40. "And Pharoah said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharoah said unto Joseph. Forasmuch as God has shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou."

Here we get a glimpse of the secret that lay back of Joseph's extraordinary life; it was the Spirit of God. Perhaps there never was a life that touched more closely the common life of suffering humanity. We see in him a

true and noble nature exposed to the discipline of the keenest suffering; separated from home and friends; carried into captivity in a foreign land; misunderstood, traduced, unjustly condemned, and cast into a prison under the deepest and most unjust opprobrium and disgrace; and yet, so heroically standing true to God and righteousness, and so steadfastly trusting in the divine faithfulness and love, that he triumphed at length over all his difficulties, rose from the prison to a princedom of honor and influence, and from the very lowest place found a pathway to the highest position that it was possible for a mortal to attain. Was there ever a more extraordinary transformation, was there ever a more striking object lesson of the power of high and holy character?

But the passage we have quoted reveals the secret of it all. It was not the triumph of human character, but the result of a divine direction that led him through all his steppings and lifted him above all his trials. It was a beautiful illustration of the work of the Holy Spirit in the practical affairs of human life, and the commonplace sphere through which the largest part of our existence here has to pass.

The most beautiful fact about it all was, that even Pharoah himself, the proud and ungodly king of Egypt, was the first to recognize this divine presence in Joseph's life. Joseph did not have to advertise himself as one possessed of the Holy Spirit; but as the men of the world watched him, they themselves were compelled to say, "Can we find such a one as this in whom the Spirit of God is?"

It is so beautiful when even ungodly men are compelled to see and glorify God in our lives. There is no greater triumph of holy character than to compel the testimony of the men of the world to the power of God in us.

This was the glory of Daniel's life, that even his worst enemies had to say, "We can find nothing against this man, except it be as concerning the law of his God"; and the grandest testimony ever given to Jesus Christ by human lips was that of His judge, Pontius Pilate, when he was forced to say, "I bring Him forth to you that ye may know that I find no fault in Him."

O, men of the world, O, young men, looking out upon the future and wanting to know the secret of the highest success, would that you might know that the same Spirit that guided Joseph's steps, and led him through his painful pathway until from the dungeon of Pharoah and the kitchen of Potiphar he reached the premiership of all Egypt, and indeed of all the world, is ready to be your Guide, your Teacher, your Wisdom, and the Source of all your strength, success, and happiness.

2. The next example is the case of Moses and Aaron: Exodus 4:10-16. In this passage we have an account of God's call to Moses to undertake the leadership of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, and the special task of going to Pharoah to demand the release of God's people from their bondage. We find Moses shrinking from the task because he was slow of speech and asking God to send somebody else. God answers Moses by saying, "Who hath made man's mouth, or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

Still Moses was unsatisfied and unwilling, and then God became displeased with him and bade him call his brother Aaron. "And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God."

Here we see God offering to be to Moses not only the

wisdom to know what he ought to say, but the power of utterance to say it rightly. The faith of Moses, however, was not quite equal to the mighty promise. God, therefore, indulged him in his timidity and unbelief by sharing the commission with another, and giving him Aaron to be a voice and an utterance for him.

In accepting this compromise, Moses lost a great deal, for the same God that gave Aaron the power of utterance could just as well have given it to him. It was all of God from beginning to end, and Moses might just as well have had the whole blessing as the half. Indeed, as the sequel proved, the partnership of Aaron was perhaps a doubtful blessing, because the day came when this same Aaron became the tempter of Israel and the snare of Moses. It was he who made for the children of Israel the golden calf which they worshipped in idolatrous wickedness at the foot of Mt. Sinai, thereby bringing down upon their heads the anger and judgment of an offended God. So that, instead of being altogether a help to him, the prop that he leaned upon broke under his weight and pierced his own hand and heart.

The lesson is a very practical one for us. The same Spirit that called and commissioned Moses for his great undertaking is promised to us as our enduement of power for the service to which He sends us. He is able to be to us a "mouth and wisdom, which all our adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist." But if we look to our own strength or weakness, or lean upon the strength and wisdom of others, we, like Moses, shall find that our earthly reliance will become a snare, and we shall be taught by painful experience the wretchedness of "the man who trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm," and the safety and happiness of depending only upon God for all our resources of wisdom and strength for the work for which He sends us.

3. The next example of the Spirit of wisdom we find in Numbers 6: 11-17, and also verses 24-29. This passage

is similar to the last in its general significance. We find Moses feeling the heavy pressure of the responsibility that rested upon him as the leader of the people. Their unbelief and rebellion were continually grieving and breaking his heart, and at last he breaks out with a discouraged and petulant complaint against God, "Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant? . . . that Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? . . . I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." God took him up immediately, as He is always ready to take us at our word.

It is a very serious thing to speak hasty words to God and words of discouragement and distrust. It is a very sad and solemn thing to ask God to relieve us of any trust that He has put upon our shoulders. It is very easy to miss our crown and our life service by petulance and unbelief. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, . . . and I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bearest not thyself alone." And a little later it is added, "The Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease."

Now, at the first sight, all this looks like a very great increase of help and power to Moses; instead of bearing the burdens of the people alone he gets seventy men to help him, men of wisdom and experience, men possessing the same Spirit which was upon him. But when we look more closely at it we notice that these men did not receive any additional power whatever, but only a portion of the same Spirit which was already upon Moses. In other words, God took a little of the power that Moses already had and distributed it among a number of per-

sons, so that instead of one person having the power, seventy-one persons now had it; but there was no more power among the seventy-one than there had been upon the one. All the wisdom of God and all the strength of God had been given to Moses personally, and God had no more to give to the seventy elders. It was spread out a little more and over a wider surface. Nay, before the story was ended, these seventy elders became as great a trial to the heart of Moses as Aaron, his brother. Indeed, they were the beginning of the famous Council of Seventy, who afterwards were called the Sanhedrim or Council of the Seventy Elders, the very Council of Seventy who afterwards condemned to death and became guilty of the crucifixion of the Son of God Himself. These, the seventy elders for whom Moses in his unbelief asked, instead of being a real help, became, perhaps, a hindrance.

What is the lesson for us? That the Spirit of God is our All-Sufficiency for every work to which He sends us, and that He is able to work as well by few as by many, by one as by one thousand. Our trust should not be in numbers or in human wisdom, but in the strength of God Himself, whether that strength is given without human instrumentalities, or through the sympathy and help of multitudes. Men may help us in the work of God, but only as God sends them and fills them with His own power.

A little later in this narrative we have the account of two of the elders, namely, Eldad and Medad, verses 26-29, who were found prophesying beyond the limits of their special appointment. Moses' friends were disposed to rebuke them and restrain them, but Moses in his large-hearted wisdom recognized the fact that God's gifts often overrun all ordinary channels and that the Holy Spirit cannot be confined by our ideas of propriety. He let them alone, as we should do with our brethren when we see them working for God and wit-

nessing for the truth, even outside the pale of our conventional forms and organizations. God's power is greater than our petty programs, and if a man is but honoring Christ and witnessing for Him in the power of the Holy Spirit, let us not try to bring him into our particular set or make him pronounce our petty Shiboleth.

4. The next example of this divine endument is Joshua, Numbers 27:18. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight."

In this passage we see Joshua already possessing the Spirit before Moses ordains him to a special charge, showing that personal preparation must always come before public ordination. It is not the act of ordination that gives a man the Spirit, but it is the possession of the Spirit that entitles a man to public ordination. God must make a minister first by his own direct enabling. When God has given him the Spirit, it is the part of man to recognize what God has done and to set apart the truly-consecrated instrument for special service.

There is another passage, Deuteronomy 34:9, which shows how the act or ordination may be followed in a truly consecrated person by added blessing and deeper fullness of the Spirit. "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him." Here we see that after Moses laid his hands upon Joshua there was added fullness of blessing. There are two stages, therefore, in Joshua's spiritual history: first, he has the Spirit before he was called to his great trust; and then, his call to the trust brought him a higher fullness of the Spirit. Would we be honored with special service for God? Let us be filled with the Spirit continually, and ready at His hand

for whatever ministry He needs us, and we shall be more likely to be called. Have we been called to special service? Then let us throw ourselves upon Him for larger measures of His grace and, like Joshua, be filled with the Spirit.

This was the secret of Joshua's wondrous life. While Moses was divinely endued for his great task by the Spirit of wisdom, and Joseph was fitted for his practical life by the Spirit of righteousness, discretion, and courage, Joshua needed just as distinct and divine an enabling for his mighty undertaking. He was to be the military leader of Israel's great campaign, the warrior captain of the Lord's triumphant host, and he needed peculiar equipment for his mighty task. He was sent against the mightiest nations of antiquity, the powerful Hittite kings, who, as we learn from the records of the post, were the rivals of the Egyptians themselves in military prowess. He was sent with an army of undisciplined men to attack the mightiest strongholds of powerful nations. Before his victorious legions in a few short years their mightiest citadels fell, and no less than thirty-one powerful sovereigns were brought into subjection.

No grander military campaign was ever fought, and the very highest qualities of wisdom, strategy, courage, faith, and perseverance were needed for this mighty undertaking. All these were given by the Holy Spirit; and all these the Holy Spirit can still give to the soldier of Christ and the servant of God for conflict, leadership, service in the grander undertakings of these last days when Christ is marshalling His hosts for the conflict of the ages and the coming of the King.

5. We have yet one more example of the practical gifts of the Holy Spirit. In some respects it is the most remarkable and encouraging of all. We find the record in Exodus 35:30-35. It is the story of Bezaleel and Aholiab, who were specially skilled as mechanics and

artisans to prepare the skilled work for the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the children of Israel, "See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel . . . and hath filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, and in the cutting of stones to set them, and in the carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And He hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aholiab . . . Them hath He filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work."

Here we have a list of almost all kinds of mechanical and artistic work. It is work of the most practical kind and of the very highest style of decorative art, the work of the jeweler, the carver, the embroiderer, the sculptor. All this is the result not of education, nor of careful training, but of direct divine inspiration. Here were people who had come from the brickfields of Egypt, a race of slaves without the advantages of culture, and yet God divinely enabled them in the hour of need, to devise and execute the most elaborate and ornamental designs for the most perfect and beautiful edifice which ever was constructed by the hands of man.

What a lesson for the toiling artisan, for the hard-working Christian, for the man of business, in the practical affairs of our work-a-day life. Here we have the divine Presence revealed as not only for the pulpit, the prayer meeting and the closet of prayer, but just as available for the factory, for the workshop, for the business office, for the school-room, and even for the kitchen.

Here is a Holy Spirit who is just as much at home

amid the toiling hours and heavy pressures of Monday and Saturday, as in the holy worship and the religious occupations of the Sabbath. Here is a divine sufficiency, not only for our spiritual experiences and our religious duties, so-called, but for everything that fills up our common life.

Oh, how it helps and comforts us in the plod of life to know that we have a Christ who spent the first thirty years of His life in the carpenter shop at Nazareth, swinging the hammer, covered with sweat and grimy dust, physically weary as we often are, and able to understand all our experiences of drudgery and labor, One who still loves to share our common tasks and equip us for our difficult undertakings of hand and brain!

Yes, humble sister, He will help you at the washboard and the kitchen-sink as gladly as at the hour of prayer. Yes, busy mechanic, He will go with you and help you to swing the hammer, or handle the saw, or hold the plow in the toil of life; and you shall be a better mechanic, a more skillful workman, and a more successful man, because you take His wisdom for the common affairs of life. The God we serve is not only the God of the Sabbath, and of the world of sentiment and feeling; but He is the God of Providence, the God of Nature, the Author and Director of the whole mechanism of human life. There is no place nor time where He is not able and willing to walk by our side, to work through our hands and brains, and to unite Himself in loving and all-sufficient partnership with all our needs and tasks and trials, and to prove our all-sufficiency for all things.

Such then is the Old Testament picture of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind. In Joseph we see Him in the trials of human life. In Moses we see Him qualifying a great leader for his high commission, and able to sustain him through the most trying emergencies and pressures. In Joshua we see Him able to equip a mighty warrior for his conflicts

and campaigns and to crown his career with splendid victory, and in Bezaleel and Aholiab we see Him coming down to the level of our secular callings and our commonplace duties, and fitting us for all the tasks and toils of life.

Blessed Holy Spirit—our Wisdom and our Guide! Let us enlarge the sphere of His operations, let us take Him into partnership in all the length and breadth of our human life, and let us prove to the world that,

> "We need not bid for cloistered cell,
> Our neighbor and our work farewell.
> The daily round, the common task,
> Will furnish all we need to ask.
> Room to deny ourselves a road
> To bring us daily more of God."

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

"But God has chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence.—1. Cor. 1: 27, 28, 29.

THE book of Judges marks the deepest depression and declension in the Old Testament records, just as the book of Joshua which precedes it, marks the most glorious triumph of Israel's history. That triumph stands between the story of the wilderness on the one side, with its forty years of wandering, and the story of the Judges on the other, with its four hundred years of declension.

The dark cloud that followed the conquest of Canaan was far deeper and denser than the one that preceded it, and it lasted through four and a half centuries, until the time of the Reformation under Samuel and David. But God loves to use the darkest clouds as His background for the rainbows of His most gracious manifestations. The brightest exhibitions of God's grace have always been in the face of the adversary's most fierce assaults.

The ministry of Elijah came in the dark hour of Jezebel's idolatrous rule. The story of Jeremiah stands over against the sorrowful scenes of Judah's captivity and Jerusalem's fall; and the book of Judges, with its four and a half centuries of idolatry and sin, have given us the beautiful incidents of Othniel and Deborah, Gideon and Barak, Jephthah and Samson.

Each of these is an object lesson of the grace and

power of the Holy Spirit, in calling and using His own agents and messengers for the great work for which He needs them.

I.

Othniel represents the Spirit of courage, Judges 3:10: "And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the Lord delivered Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand." Othniel was the first of Israel's judges, and by the power of the Holy Spirit he conquered the mighty monarch of Mesopotamia, and secured for his country nearly half a century of peace.

All this is directly attributed to the Spirit. The same power that fitted Moses for his legislative work, and prepared Joshua for his military career, called and qualified Othniel for his successful presidency over the affairs of his nation, and gave him the lion-hearted courage that enabled him to defy the mightiest potentate of the world.

But as every distinguished career has an earlier chapter behind it, so there was an hour in the story of Othniel of which all his subsequent career was but the sequel. The earlier chapter is given to us in Joshua 15:16, 17. It is the little incident connected with the capture of one of the strongholds of Canaan. After Caleb had conquered Hebron, he found an adjacent city, Kirjath-sepher, which was the literary capital of the Canaanites. It means "The City of Books." To the brave warrior who should conquer it he offered the hand of his fair daughter Achsah. Othniel was the hero who accepted the challenge and won the double prize.

When we see some public character accomplishing distinguished service before the eyes of the world, and leaping apparently from obscurity to fame in a moment, we are apt to forget that back of that brilliant success there lies some little incident that happened, perhaps

long years before, but which really struck the keynote of that life, and prepared that individual for the public service which the future held in store.

God is always preparing His workers in advance; and when the hour is ripe He brings them upon the stage, and men look with wonder upon a career of startling triumph, which God has been preparing for a lifetime. That was a wonderful day in Israel, when, in a moment, the chambers of the dead heard the voice of God, and the first human spirit came back from the world beyond to the tenement of clay, and her living son was placed in the arms of a Hebrew mother at the word of the prophet Elijah.

But if we look back a few years, we find the key to all this in a little incident that happened one day in that Hebrew home. The old prophet was passing by when he met that mother and asked of her a mighty sacrifice, even that she should take the last morsel in her famine-stricken home, prepare it for him, and leave her child to die of want along with herself. But she shrank not from the test. Without a moment's hesitation she obeyed the prophet's command, and from that hour she and her little son lived in that home on the bread of heaven. When the test came that required a faith that would bring back her child even from the dead, she was ready for the hour.

God is preparing His heroes still, so that when the opportunity comes He can fit them into their places in a moment while the world wonders where they came from. Let the Holy Ghost prepare you, dear friend, by all the discipline of life, that when the last finishing touch has been given to the marble, it will be easy for God to put it on the pedestal, and fit it into the niche.

There is a day coming when, like Othniel, we, too, shall judge the nations, and rule and reign with Christ on the millennial earth. But ere that glorious day can be, we must let God prepare us as He did Othniel at

Kirjath-sepher, amid the trials of our present life, and in the daily victories, the significance of which, perhaps, we little dream. At least, let us be sure of this, that if the Holy Ghost has got an Othniel ready, the Lord of heaven and earth has a throne prepared for him.

II.

Deborah shows forth the ministry of woman. Judges 4. Deborah is the first example of a woman called to public service by the Holy Ghost. True, Miriam had already been known as the leader of sacred song in Israel, but this was the first time that a woman had been called to exercise the public functions of a leader.

What a glorious multitude of noble women have followed in her train! The great ministry of the Church today is being done by holy women. It is less than half a century since women began to go to the foreign mission field, and already more that half the foreign missionaries in the world are women. They are the most potent spiritual and moral forces of our age.

Deborah's name means "a bee," and her little beehive under the palm tree of Mount Ephraim has swarmed and spread over all ages and lands until the hearts of millions have tasted of the honey, and every form of evil has felt the wholesome sting; but Deborah, like every true woman, had a good deal more honey than sting. It is too late in the day to question the public ministry of woman. The facts of God's providence, and the fruits of God's Spirit, are stronger than all our theological fancies.

The Holy Spirit has distinctly recognized woman's place in the Church, not only to love, to suffer, and to intercede, but to prophesy, to teach, and to minister in every proper way to the bodies and the souls of men. And yet, when we have said this, all this, there yet remains a restriction which every true woman will be willing to recognize.

There is a difference between the ministry of woman and of man. God Himself has said that the head of every woman is the man, and the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God. "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man." After all that can be said on both sides of this question, it seems to remain, as the practical conclusion of the whole matter, that woman is called without restriction to teach, to witness, to work in every department of the Church of Christ, but she is not called to rule in the ecclesiastical government of the Church of Christ, or to exercise the official ministry which the Holy Ghost has committed to the elders or bishops of His Church; and whenever she steps out of her modest sphere into the place of public leadership and executive government, she weakens her true power and loses her peculiar charm.

Deborah herself, the first public woman of the ages, was wise enough to call Barak to stand in the front, while she stood behind him, modestly directing his work, and proving in the end to be the true leader. It is no disparagement of woman's ministry to place her there. Who will say that the ministry of Moses as he stood that day on the mountain, with his hands uplifted to God, while Joshua led the hosts in the plain below, was a lower ministry than that of Joshua? He was the true leader and the real power behind the hosts of Israel, although he was unseen by the eyes of men. This was Deborah's high honor, and no one was more ready than Barak himself to acknowledge her pre-eminence.

May God more and more mightily direct and use the high and holy ministry of woman, in these last days, for the preparation of her Master's coming!

III.

Gideon, or the Holy Ghost, used the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. There is something

dramatic and almost ludicrous in the calling of Gideon. When hiding behind his barn for fear of the Midianites, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and called, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Gideon was taken by surprise with the strange greeting, and seems himself to have felt as if the angel were laughing at him, for he was anything but a mighty man of valor; indeed, at that very moment, he was hiding from his enemies in abject fear.

His answer to the angel seems to express this feeling, but God meets him with the reassuring word, "Go, in this thy might, and thou shalt deliver Israel from the Midianites." The new might which God had pledged him was His own great might, the power of the Holy Ghost. Accordingly every step of his way from that hour was but an illustration of the principle of our text, "that God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty."

Next, we see the same principle in Gideon's workers. God could not use the great army that gathered to his standard. They were too many to afford an opportunity for God to work and, therefore, He had to sift them, and then resift them, until from over thirty thousand they were reduced to only three hundred.

It is beautiful to notice how the Holy Spirit sifted them. He allowed them to do it themselves, by a natural process of reduction. First, all the timid ones were allowed to go home, and this thinned out two-thirds of the crowd. Next, all the rash and reckless ones were tested by giving them the opportunity of drinking at the brook that lay across their line of march; and, as Gideon watched, it was not difficult to find out, by the way they drank, the character of the men.

The reckless ones just got down on their hands and knees and drank, without even stopping to think of their danger or their enemies. The prudent ones, on the contrary, looked carefully around, and keeping guard

against a surprise from their foes, drank with prudent care, dipping up the water with their hands, and looking carefully around with their watchful eyes; thus were the wary ones chosen, and the others dismissed.

God wants not only brave men, but prudent men, for His work and warfare; and every day we live we are passing judgment on ourselves, and electing ourselves either to places of honor and service, or to be left at home, because of our unfitness. God wants fit men for His work, and He lets every man prove his fitness or unfitness by the practical tests of his daily life. We little dream, sometimes, what a hasty word, a thoughtless speech, an imprudent act, or a confession of unbelief may do to hinder our highest usefulness, or to turn it aside from some great opportunity which God was preparing for us.

Although the Holy Ghost uses weak men, He does not want them to be weak after He chooses and calls them. Although He uses the foolish things to confound the wise, He does not want us to be foolish after He comes to give us His wisdom and grace. He uses the foolishness of preaching, but not, necessarily, the foolishness of preachers. Like the electric current, which can supply the strength of a thousand men, it is necessary that it should have a proper conductor, and a very small wire is better than a very big rope.

God wants fit instruments for His power, wills surrendered, hearts trusting, lives consistent, and lips obedient to His will; and then He can use the weakest weapons, and make them "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

Again, we see the Holy Spirit using the weak things of this world in the weapons of Gideon's warfare. They were very simple—lamps, pitchers and trumpets. That was all. The lamps, or torches, were expressive of the light and fire of the Holy Ghost; the pitchers suggested the broken vessels of our surrendered bodies and lives;

and the trumpets signified the Word of God and the message of the Gospel that we are sent to proclaim. These are sufficient to defeat and destroy the hosts of Midian; and these are the weapons of our warfare, which are still mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

A single officer of the court, with the proclamation of the president behind him, is stronger than a mob of a thousand men; and the humblest servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, armed with the Holy Ghost and the Word of God, stands with the whole power of heaven behind him. Men reject His message at their peril; for Christ has said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me."

The true secret of all power with God and men is to stand behind our message and our Master, and, like Gideon's pitchers, to be so broken ourselves, that the light of our heavenly torches can flash through the broken vessels through which the message comes.

IV.

Jephthah, or the Holy Spirit, used "the things that are despised."

Jephthah, through no fault of his own, was the child of dishonor. He had the bar sinister on his breast, and was an outlaw from his father's house. But God loves to use the things that man highly esteems. The stone which the builders disallowed has often become the head of the corner. It was Isaac, not Ishmael, the first-born; it was Jacob, and not Esau, the father's favorite; it was Joseph, the persecuted, wronged and outcast son; it was Moses, the son of a race of slaves, and the foundling child of the Nile; it was David, the shepherd lad of Bethlehem, and the despised one of Jesse's house; these were they whom God chose for the high place that each received in the story of His chosen people. Accordingly the outcast and the outlaw of Gilead, poor Jeph-

thah, was chosen of the Lord to deliver his people from the Ammonites.

The call of Jephthah is expressly ascribed to the Holy Spirit. "Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over . . . unto the children of Ammon . . . and the Lord delivered them into his hand"—11:29.

The Lord still is using the things that are despised. The very names of Nazarene and Christian were once epithets of contempt. No man can have God's highest thought and be popular with his immediate generation. The most abused men are often the most used. The devil's growl and the world's sneer are God's marks of highest honor. There is no need that we should bring upon ourselves by folly or wrong the reproaches of men; but if we do well, and suffer for it, fear not, but "let Shimei curse, the Lord will requite us good for his cursing this day."

There are far greater calamities than to be unpopular and misunderstood. There are far worse things than to be found in the minority. Many of God's greatest blessings are lying behind the devil's scarecrows of prejudice and misrepresentation. The Holy Ghost is not ashamed to use unpopular people. And if He uses them, what need they care for men?

There was once a captain in the British army, promoted for merit, but despised by his aristocratic companions. One day the colonel found it out, and determined to stop it. So he quietly called on the young officer, and walked arm and arm with him up and down the parade ground, the captains meanwhile being obliged to salute both him and his companion every time they passed. That settled the new captain's standing. After that there were no cuts nor sneers. It was enough that the commanding officer had walked by his side.

Oh, let us but have His recognition and man's notice will count for little, and He will give us all we need of

human help and praise. Let us make no compromise to please men. Let us only seek His will, His glory, His approval. Let us go for Him on the hardest errands and do the most menial tasks. Honor enough that He uses us and sends us. Let us not fear in this day to follow Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach, and bye-and-bye He will own our worthless name before the myriads of earth and sky.

v.

Samson in whom the Holy Ghost is the source of physical strength.

There is no more remarkable figure in the Bible than the sturdy giant of Timnath-serah, who represented in his own body, as no other man has ever done, the connection between physical strength and the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. The strength of Samson was not the result of physical culture and unusual size and vigor of bone, muscle, or members, but was entirely due to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him and working through him. The secret of his great strength is given very simply and plainly in such passages as these: Judges 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14.

In all these cases it will be noticed that it was the Spirit of the Lord that moved upon Samson and gave him his superhuman strength of body. It was not the strength of muscle or frame which comes from food or stimulants; but it was the direct power of God Himself working through his being. This was connected entirely with his separation to God and his obedience to his Nazarite vow. The strength of Samson, therefore, was divine strength given through spiritual conditions and entirely dependent upon his righteousness of life and obedience to God.

This is the very principle of divine healing, as God is teaching it to us in these last days. It is not the self-

constituted strength of physical organism; but it is the supernatural force of a divine presence, filling our frame and quickening our vital system when we are wholly separated from earthly and forbidden things and living in touch with the Holy Spirit. It may be enjoyed even in the fullest measure by a feeble constitution and a man or woman naturally frail. It is not our life, but the life of Jesus manifested in our mortal flesh. It is a very sacred life, for it keeps us constantly separated from the world and unto God, and is a wholesome check upon the purity and obedience of our lives.

Samson lost his strength the moment he touched the forbidden world and the lap of Delilah. For us, too, the secret of strength is this: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." This is the blessed ministry of the Holy Ghost; first, to give us this practical righteousness and keep us in the perfect will of God, and then to give us the physical life and quickening promised in connection with obedience. His own promise is, "If the Spirit of Him which raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Such, then, is the blessed fullness of the Holy Spirit as unfolded in this ancient book of Judges. How much more rich and full the grace we may expect from Him today!

Shall we take Him with Othniel as the Spirit of courage; with Deborah, for woman's high and glorious ministry; with Gideon and Jepthah, to use the weak things of this world to confound the mighty, and the things which are despised, yea, and the things which are not,

to bring to naught the things which are; and shall we, like Samson, "out of weakness be made strong, wax valiant in fight and turn to flight the armies of the aliens"?

CHAPTER X.

A SPIRIT-FILLED MAN.

"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."—Job 32: 8.

"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."—Job 33: 4.

THE book of Job is the oldest poem in the world. It has come down to us from a period somewhere between the time of Abraham and Joshua. It is a profoundly interesting drama, unfolding some of the most important principles of the divine government, and revealing God's personal dealings with His people through the Holy Spirit.

First, Job himself appears upon the scene as the type of a high and noble character, a man of perfect uprightness, one who represents the very highest ideal of human character.

Next, we see God testing this man, revealing to him the depths of self and sin which lie concealed in every human soul, until, at length, Job appears under the searchlight of the Holy Ghost a pitiful spectacle, not only of disease and suffering, but of self-righteousness, self-vindication, and rebellion against God Himself.

One by one various characters appear upon the scene, representing the wisdom and comfort and friendship of the world—in fact, all that the world can do to help us in our trouble. We have Bildad and Eliphaz and Zophar representing, perhaps, the wisdom, the wealth, and the pleasure of the world, but all failing to bring to Job the comfort, the instruction, and the discipline that he needs.

Finally, Elihu appears upon the stage; and, for the first time, he brings the message and the help of God.

His very name signifies God Himself, and his words are in keeping with the source from which his message comes.

Let us look at him as one of the oldest examples of the indwelling, inworking, and outflowing of the Holy Spirit.

First, we have the man. Secondly, we will consider his message. And then we will notice the effect of his message in its influence upon Job, the object of attention in the whole drama of this wonderful book.

First, he tells us himself that he was a young man. "I am young," he says, "and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you my opinion." God can speak to and through even the youngest of His disciples. But notice the modesty of Elihu. He was sensitive, shrinking, and full of that modest diffidence which is always the criterion of true worth. The more God uses us, the more should we shrink out of self-consciousness and human observation. Then, we see not only his modesty, but his respect for others and his beautiful disposition to wait and to show the utmost deference to those who are naturally his superiors.

There is no reason why we should thrust ourselves forward because we have the Holy Spirit and are trusted with His messages. The Spirit-filled man will always be filled with deference and consideration for others. In speaking to the New Testament assemblies, the apostle tells them particularly to guard against this very thing, for He says, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." When God gives us a message He can afford to have us wait. So Elihu waited till the others were through, and then he spoke with effect.

But while Elihu is respectful and modest, he is at the same time perfectly independent of the opinions of people, and is bold and fearless in obeying the voice of God, which he has heard in the depths of his own soul. "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person;

neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my Maker would soon take me away." And so the Spirit-filled man is free from all men. He does not try to copy any man, but listens directly to the voice of God through His Word and His Spirit. So many of us are parrots, catching the opinion and the ideas of others. God wants individual characters and individual messages, and every one of us to be himself filled and taught of the Holy Ghost.

We see in Elihu a man so filled with the Holy Ghost that he cannot keep back his words. He says, "The Spirit within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles." This is the way the apostle felt, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." We need this volcanic power to give force and propelling power to the message with which God trusts us.

Again, we see in Elihu a man supremely anxious to glorify God, and grieved because Job's friends have not answered his questions and vindicated God. His one desire is to glorify his Maker and his Master. Such a man always will be taught and used of His Master. The Holy Spirit is waiting for such men and women.

II.

THE MESSAGE OF ELIHU.

It is a very wonderful message. It unfolds the deepest principles of God's moral government, and rises to the loftiest height of inspired eloquence. There is no profounder discussion of God's dealings with His children. God is always speaking to His people. "God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not," is heedless, or blind and deaf, failing therefore, to understand his Father's voice. Then God has to speak

again through sickness and physical suffering; and so we have the picture in the thirty-third chapter, from the nineteenth to the twenty-second verses.

It is the picture of a poor sufferer chastened with pain, sinking day by day into emaciation and exhaustion, until he is ready to drop into the grave. This, however, is not God's last voice; there is another message, but oh, how rarely and how seldom the true messenger is found! "One among a thousand." What a blessed message He brings! He shows man His uprightness, the loving kindness of His chastening, leading him to repentance, and then He unfolds the blessed message of the great atonement, and cries, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." What is the effect of this? "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth."

This is the blessed Gospel of the Atonement—atonement for sickness as well as sin; this is the blessed Gospel of Healing—healing for body as well as soul. It was God's ancient thought, and it is still unchanged—His will for all who will simply believe and receive.

This is God's uniform principle of dealing with His children. "These things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." God's chastenings are not the zigzag lightnings of the sky, that strike we know not where or when, but the intelligent, intelligible, loving dealings of a Father, who will let us understand why He afflicts us. He Himself has told us in the New Testament, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." This is God's object in dealing with His children, to bring them out of some position that is wrong into His higher will; and as soon as we learn our lesson, He is glad to remove the pressure, and to bring us into the full manifestation of His favor and blessing for

both soul and body. Can we find anywhere a wiser, broader, truer unfolding of God's gracious providence and His loving, faithful dealings with His children than in the old message of Elihu, more than three thousand years ago.

Then He passes on to a more sublime discourse, in which He sweeps the whole circle of the heavens and the whole field of nature, and unfolds the glory and majesty of God in all His works. At length, as He reaches His loftiest height, God interrupts Him, and closes His sublime oration with a yet grander peroration, as He speaks through the whirlwind to Job with a voice that he can no longer answer nor gainsay.

III.

THE EFFECT OF THE MESSAGE.

This brings us to the effect of the message upon Job himself. This is the great central thought of the whole book and the entire drama.

Job meets us as the central figure and the type of ourselves. He represents man at his best, just as Elihu at the close represents man at God's best.

We see in Job an upright man, the best man of his time, the best that man can be by the help of divine grace, until he dies to himself altogether and enters into union with God Himself.

The first picture of Job is a favorable one, both to himself and to everybody else. He seems to be all right, until God brings the searchlight and the surgical probe to bear upon him, when, like everything else that is human, he breaks completely down, and shows himself in all the weakness and worthlessness of our lost humanity. The worst thing that we find in Job is Job himself. God was not trying to convince him of any glaring sin, but of his self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, and self-confidence. The thing that we have to deny is self. The

hardest thing to see and to crucify is our own self-confidence and self-will; and we have to pass through many a painful incident and many a humiliating failure before we find it out and fully recognize it.

Accordingly we find Job, under the divine searchlight, signally failing, revealing his unbelief, vindicating himself, and even blaming God for unjustly afflicting him. One by one his various friends appear upon the scene representing the wisdom, wealth, and pleasure of the world; but Job sees through the fallacy of all their arguments, and refuses their messages, until, at length, Elihu comes with the inspired message of God. God follows it by directly revealing Himself to Job, and speaking from the whirlwind with a voice that he can no longer resist.

Job in the light of God at length wakes up to his own worthlessness and nothingness, and falling silent at Jehovah's feet, he cries, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This is, at last, the death of self; and now God is ready to pick up His servant, to forgive his errors and faults, and even to vindicate him in the face of his friends.

Then, for the first time, we hear God approving Job and saying to his unwise friends, "Ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, as my servant Job hath." What was the thing which Job had spoken of Him that was right? It was his language of self-condemnation, humiliation, renunciation. Job had now ended and God was ready to begin. God immediately responds to him not only with His favor and blessing, but with all the prosperity and blessing which he had lost; and Job rises to a new place in every way.

This is the resurrection life unfolded in the ancient type. This is the resurrection life into which the Holy Ghost is waiting to bring all who are willing, like Job,

to die to the life of self. God was not looking in Job for any open sin or flagrant wrong; but He was searching for the subtle self-life which lies concealed behind a thousand disguises in us all, and which is so slow and so unwilling to die.

God has often to bring us not only into the place of suffering, and to the bed of sickness and pain, but also into the place where our righteousness breaks down, and our character falls to pieces, in order to humble us in the dust and to show us the need of entire crucifixion to all our natural life. Then, at the feet of Jesus we are ready to receive Him, to abide in Him, to depend upon Him alone, and to draw all our life and strength each moment from Him, our Living Head.

It was thus that Peter was saved by his very fall. He had to die to Peter that he might live more perfectly to Christ.

Have we thus died, and have we thus renounced the strength of our own self-confidence? Happy, indeed, are we if this be so; for we shall have Christ and all His resources of strength. Then He can afford to give to us, as he did to Job, all the riches of His goodness and all the gifts of His providence that we need in our secular and temporal life.

We begin life with the natural, next we come into the spiritual; then, when we have truly received the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, the natural is added to the spiritual, and we are able to receive the gifts of His providence and the blessings of life without becoming centred in them or allowing them to separate us from Him.

This is the sweet lesson of the life of Job. This is the bright and happy sequel to all his sorrow. This is the ripening of the seed of death and pain. This is the blessed fruition of all his affliction. This is but a little type of that richer resurrection life which the New Testament reveals.

The blessed Holy Spirit is waiting to lead us all into the path of life through the gates of death. Some one tells of a gentleman who called upon an old friend and was invited by the proprietor to go with him to survey his splendid new warehouse. As they started to go to the upper floor, the visitor began immediately to climb the stair. "Oh," said his friend, "this way," and opened a little side door and led him down a few steps to a platform where a door opened into an elevator. "This is the way we go up now"; and then they mounted by that elevator to the very top of the building, eight or ten stories high, and came down from floor to floor without the slightest effort. As they returned to the office the gentleman said: "I have just been thinking that this is God's new way of ascension. He leads us down first, and then He puts us into His elevator and lifts us up to Himself."

This is the story of Job. This is the story of Jesus. This is the story of every true life. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." God help us to die. Fear not the pain, the sacrifice, the surrender. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil: for thou art with me." And on the other side you shall say, "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Oh, how sweet it is to die with Jesus,
To the world and self and sin!
Oh, how sweet it is to live with Jesus,
As He lives and reigns within!

CHAPTER XI.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIVES OF SAUL AND DAVID.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit."—Psalm 5: 10-12.

THESE words express the prayer of David at an important era in his life, and suggest to us his relation to the Holy Spirit in his deepest experience. Back of this picture there lies in dim outline another picture, that of a life that had also possessed the Holy Spirit but had lost His blessing; and it was, perhaps, in reference to this dark, sad background that David cried, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." The other picture is that of Saul. These two lives stand side by side as companion pictures illustrating the dealings of the Holy Spirit with two opposite characters, and leading to entirely opposite issues. It is a very solemn contrast and a very instructive lesson.

1. First, in the story of Saul we find that he, too, had the Holy Spirit. We have a very distinct account of his call and enduement by the Spirit. We find the story in the tenth chapter of First Samuel. Here we see the Spirit coming upon a man almost unsought, and apparently without any spiritual preparation. It was the Spirit of God coming for service, giving him power to prophesy, to conquer, to rule, the enduement for service rather than for personal experience.

There is always real danger just at this point. It is a very serious thing to want the Holy Ghost simply

to give us power to work for God. It is much more important that we should receive the Holy Spirit for personal character and personal holiness. Perhaps the deep secret of Saul's failure was that, like Balaam, he had power to witness and to work rather than to live and obey.

God's graces are higher than God's gifts, and one grain of love is worth a thousand lightning flashes of prophetic fire.

Again, we see, perhaps, another secret of Saul's failure, in the fact that the power came upon him largely from others. It was when he was in company with the prophets that the spirit of prophecy came upon him.

There is always danger of absorbing much from the atmosphere around us, and being too little self-contained and directly centred in God. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart is departed from the Lord." The difference between Saul and David was that David knew God for himself, and knew Him from a deep personal experience of the indwelling life of the Spirit, and the outflowing life of habitual obedience, while Saul knew Him only as a supernatural impulse for his public life.

But notwithstanding these drawbacks, the enduement of Saul with the Spirit of God was very deep and very important. It marked a complete crisis in his life, and his heart was changed into another heart, and he became another man.

It is very remarkable how fully God can possess a human soul. We read of demoniac possession through which the entire being of a man becomes so controlled by evil spirits that they are able to add tenfold intensity and force to his life. Why may not a man be just as much God-possessed as he can be Satan-possessed, so that every faculty and power of his being shall be filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, and his energy and capability shall be redoubled?

This was the case with Saul, and it may be true of us. Look again, how all-sufficient His divine presence was for every emergency. "When this is come upon thee," Samuel said, "thou shalt do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee."

We do not need to have elaborate plans or depend upon our own wisdom; for we have a Guide and a Friend that will direct us as need shall require, and, if we will acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will direct our paths.

So Saul started in his career. No man ever had a more promising beginning, supported by splendid personnel, an enthusiastic people, a clear call of God and a manifestly divine enduement for his great work. Surely he had every opportunity to accomplish the grandest results for God and man.

But, alas! he ended in disappointment and failure. His kingdom ere long was rent from him by the hand of God, and his sun went down in darkness and blood. What were the causes of his failure, and what are the lessons of this strange career?

We find the test coming to him very soon. Samuel sent him on a high commission, and told him to wait a certain time until he should arrive. He bade him tarry seven days, promising him to come and offer sacrifices to God before marching against their enemies. Saul waited until the seven days had expired, and then, becoming impatient and anxious, he rashly offered the sacrifice himself. No sooner was the sacrifice accomplished than Samuel arrived and told him that, by his disobedience, he had forfeited the approval of God and the permanence of his kingdom.

It may seem a little thing, but little things are always deciding the issues of life because they are the best tests of real principle and character. It was but a little thing that wrecked the human race. One trifling act of disobedience, one minute detail of God's commandments

in which our first parents dared to take their own way began the career of rebellion and independence which has brought upon the human race all their sorrow.

This act indicated the true spirit of Saul. One word expresses that better than any other, self-will.

Although God had appointed him to be His king, Saul insisted upon being his own master, thereby proving himself unfit for his trust.

It was not long before the second test came. God gave Saul another chance, He sent him on an expedition against the Amalekites, Israel's ancient foes, types of the flesh and the world, and the enemies of the true life of God in the soul. His instructions were implicit and peremptory. He was to destroy Amalek utterly. Because God went with him in his expedition and crowned him with success, Saul returned victorious, having subdued Amalek and laid waste all their cities; but he brought back with him the best of the spoil and Agag, their king, to grace his triumph.

Samuel arrived just as he was congratulating himself on his splendid success, and his faithful fulfillment of his great commission. Saul met him with confidence, but Samuel responded with a stern rebuke. "I have obeyed the commandment of the Lord," says the king. Then followed those terrible words of divine denunciation, which ended at last in the withdrawal of Samuel. As Saul clung to him in despair, the prophet's garment parted in the hands of the king, and Samuel declared that it was the pledge of the broken covenant and the loss of his kingdom.

Saul betrayed the real earthliness of his heart by his last appeal. "Honor me," he cried, "at least before the people," and God granted him the little gratification which for the time satisfied his poor shallow heart. Out of this dark and dreadful scene there comes one sentence which is the keynote of true obedience and true success. "Obedience is better than sacrifice and to

hearken than the fat of the rams." This was the secret of Saul's failure; he lacked the true hearkening spirit and the obedient will.

He was quite willing to go half way with God as long as it did not cross his personal preferences; but when there came a test and a sacrifice, his obedience failed, and he pleased himself rather than God. This was the essential difference between Saul and David. It was this that made David a man after God's heart. He wanted to obey God, and the real purpose of his heart was to please Jehovah.

Saul was a man after his own heart, and he wanted to please and glorify poor Saul. He was the type of a man that had power without grace, and gifts without holiness.

His desire to spare Agag was but a sample of his whole spirit. He wanted to spare himself. Agag is the type of the self-life and the whole story illustrates the great lesson of self-crucifixion, which lies at the threshold of all spiritual blessing. Amalek and the flesh must die. Saul was not willing that they should die, and, therefore, Saul had to die. He that would save his life must lose it, and he that is willing to lose his earth-life will keep it unto the life that is not of earth but eternal.

This was the turning point in Saul's career. From this time the Spirit of God left him, and "an evil spirit from God" possessed him. It was the spirit of Satan, but it was by divine permission.

We touch a very awful theme here, but one that we dare not evade. We are taught in many places in the Holy Scripture that when men refuse the leading of the Holy Ghost, and choose their own way and the ways of Satan, the Lord lets them be filled with ther own devices and gives them over to the power of evil.

Oh, let us not trifle with the sacred things of God! Let us not talk lightly of the perseverance of the saints

when we are presumptuously disobeying God. Like the little child who keeps her hoop steady in its movement by touching it first on the one side then upon the other, so God speaks to us His promises and His threatenings as we are ready to receive them. To the disobedient and careless disciple He says with great solemnity, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." But to the poor trembling heart, sinking in its own discouragement, He cries, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"; "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

Like the pilgrim in Bunyan's dream, let us both hope and fear. Let us guard against the first step backward. We never know where it is going to end. The apostle hints that it may be unto perdition, and he pleads with us, "Cast not, therefore, away your confidence." "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul."

2. David, likewise, has his experience of the Holy Ghost.

In the same paragraph that tells us of the Holy Spirit's departing from Saul, we read these simple words, "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (1. Samuel 16:13).

The first effect of the Holy Spirit upon David is shown in the next reference, in the eighteenth chapter of first Samuel and the fifth verse, where we read that "David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and he behaved himself wisely."

This was not only an anointing with power, but an anointing also of wisdom and grace, enabling him to

live a true life and to commend himself to this master and to all men.

The subsequent story of David's life is but an unfolding of the power of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Psalms we have the inner life of David, and in the historical books we have the outer story that corresponded to this.

We find David himself attributing his military exploits and his physical power, as well as the success of his whole kingdom, to the power of the God upon whom he depended. There is no finer illustration of this than the eighteenth Psalm, in which he himself tells us the secret of his strength.

"He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms."

"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great." Yet the warrior king recognized in his body the same power which gives us strength today in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and attributed all his victories to the power of the Holy Ghost.

In the story of his campaigns we have some vivid illustrations of his constant dependence upon the presence of God and the leadership of His Spirit. Even when he wandered as a fugitive among his enemies, we find him constantly inquiring of the Lord about all his movements. When, as he ascended the throne, the Philistines came up against him, we see him at once appealing to Jehovah, and asking, "Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into my hand? Not until the answer came and the order was given to move, did he presume to go forward.

It is needless to say that his movements were crowned with victory. A year later when the same enemy returned in force, David did not go against them as be-

fore. He again went to God for direct guidance, but he received an entirely different direction.

"Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines." Surely this was a divine plan of battle and a divine victory.

Thus he fought his battles, thus he won his crown; thus he ruled and organized his people; thus he planned the glorious temple; and thus he lived his wondrous life in the power of the same Holy Spirit which comes to us in the fuller light of the New Testament Dispensation.

We have in the Psalms some delightful revelations of the relation of the Holy Spirit to his inner life. We find in one of the most profoundly spiritual of them this prayer, "Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of unrightness." We see in some of them the unfoldings of a deeper life which makes them lighthouses for us upon the voyage of our higher Christian experience.

Nowhere else can we find a profounder conception of faith than in some of these Psalms. The thirty-seventh Psalm is not unlike the beatitudes of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

There we see two pictures, one corresponding to the story of Saul and the other to the spirit of David. There we see a man who is plotting against God's servant and seeking to slay him; and there we see the spirit of trust, fretting not because of evildoers, but trusting in the Lord with holy obedience, committing his way unto the Lord, and waiting patiently for Him, resting in the Lord and delighting himself in Him, and receiving from Him the desires of his heart.

Surely the man who could write this must have drunk deeply of the fountain of the Holy Spirit.

In the passage which we have quoted as our text we have a most definite unfolding of the Holy Spirit in David's personal experience. He is represented here in a three-fold aspect, and under three distinct names. First, as the right spirit, "Renew a right spirit within me"; second, as the Holy Spirit, "Take not thy holy Spirit from me"; third, as the free spirit, which literally means the princely spirit, the lofty, noble spirit, the spirit which communicates life and liberty. "Uphold me with thy free spirit."

These are not repetitions. First, there is the right spirit. This is connected with the clean heart. It is a work of creation. It is the spirit of the new-born soul. It is the heart that has been purified. It is not so much the indwelling person of the Spirit as the effect of His work in producing rightness of heart toward God and toward man.

Secondly, we have the Holy Spirit. This is the person of the Holy Ghost Himself, which will come into the heart that has been made right, and dwell within us in His power and holiness.

It is the Holy Spirit, the spirit which brings holiness; and holiness just means wholeness, completeness, entire conformity to the will of God. David here intimates the possibility of losing this Holy Spirit, as Saul had done; but he cries, "take not thy holy Spirit from me."

David's trust is very beautiful. He had come to a great crisis. He had forfeited his kingdom and his place of deeper blessing. Had it not been for his confidence in God, he would have been driven to despair. He had fallen and fallen so far that his whole moral nature was stunned, and his spiritual sensibilities were so paralyzed that he was left for four long years without the consciousness of his very fall. When he awoke from his dream to the dreadful consciousness of his sin the realization of his iniquity was fearful.

He beheld himself in the light of the Holy Ghost, and

cried again, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." Yet, in the face of this dark and dreadful vision, he saw the grace of God as perhaps no one ever saw it before; and he was able to rise from the depths of sin to the heights of mercy, and cry, "I shall be whiter than snow." Judas had a similar vision of his sin, but without the vision of mercy, and he sank to rise no more. But God in His infinite mercy gave David the faith to realize the divine love, so he rose from the abyss of sin to the heights of salvation. We have a similar incident in the story of the woman of Canaan, to whom Jesus gave the fearful words, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs." That expression, "dogs," meant the very depths of sin and unnatural crime. She did not deny it; she accepted it with lowly heart. Then she leaped from the depths of her unworthiness and penitence to the highest place in His love, and claimed, even as a dog, a crumb of her Master's bread. Jesus looked upon her with wonder, because she had been able to see her own unworthiness and yet to accept His mercy and grace.

This was the spirit that enabled David to trust God even in the darkest hour, and doubtless it brought David nearer to God than he had ever been before.

There is a third designation of the Holy Spirit here, "Uphold me with thy free spirit." There was danger that, in coming back to God from such an awful state, he should come in the spirit of servile fear.

And so he asks that God would give him the spirit of love and holy liberty. David is the prodigal coming back to take the highest place, to wear the best robe, the royal ring, and to sit at the heavenly banquet. God wants us all to have this spirit. It is the spirit of sonship; it is the spirit of confidence; it is the new-born spirit; it is the princely spirit.

God takes us in Jesus Christ "even as He." He has made us accepted in the Beloved, and we cannot honor

Him so much in any other way as by accepting the place He gives us and counting ourselves the objects of His perfect complacency and infinite love through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

This is the spirit of power, the spirit of love, the spirit that has spring in it and force in it, and leads us out to self-sacrifice and unselfish love. And so He adds, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee . . . and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness."

Was it with reference to this experience that he wrote the wondrous twenty-third Psalm? Surely we find there the same progression of thought and experience. First we see the restored sheep under the Shepherd's care, rejoicing in the green pastures and lying down by the waters of rest. Next we see a different picture. It is the wandering sheep, but the wandering sheep is not remembered except in the song of restoration. He restoreth my soul, He maketh me to walk in the right paths, for His name's sake.

It is here that the crisis comes, "The valley of the shadow of death." This is not literal death, but that deeper death to self and sin through which every true life must pass, and through which, perhaps, David passed after the tragedy of Uriah and Bathsheba.

Although it is a very dark valley, there is one bright thing through it all—the presence of the Lord. "Thou are with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"; "I will fear no evil."

You will notice that here He speaks of the second person. It is no longer He but THOU. God is now by his side and in his very heart. Now, how all has changed! Instead of the Shepherd, it is the Father; and instead of the fold, it is the banqueting house and the home circle. Instead of the painful returning of the prodigal, it is the table spread in the presence of his enemies, the head anointed with oil, and the overflowing

cup. This is "THE FREE SPIRIT." This is the blessing that there is not room enough to receive. Before him all is brighter still. As he looks out into the coming vista he cries, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Beloved, these are "the sure mercies of David." The Lord is waiting to give the same right spirit, the same Holy Spirit, the same free spirit, the same fullness of blessing for spirit, soul, and body. Oh, it may be that some of us, like David, have sunk with him into sin and despair! Do not yield to discouragement, but recognize the hand of mercy in the fall. Perhaps it was divine love, showing you that you were not strong enough to stand alone, and bringing you back, not to the old place of blessing, but to a place where He is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

That blessed Holy Spirit is ready to come to you and to "cause you to walk in his statutes, so that you shall keep his judgments and do them." That "Free Spirit" is longing so to fill you that "the water that he shall give you shall be in you a well of water, springing up into everlasting life"; nay, more, that drinking of His fullness you shall not be able to hold the blessing, and out of your inmost being shall go forth to others rivers of living water; and your blessing shall reach its consummation in David's closing song, "Then will I teach transgressors thy way; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." "O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise."

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets;
"She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,
"How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?
"Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."—Prov. 1: 20, 21, 22, 23.

THERE is a beautiful incident in the early history of Solomon which reveals the secert of his extraordinary life.

Just after his accession to the throne of his father, David, the Lord appeared to him in Gibeon, and gave him the right to choose any blessing he desired. Instead of choosing wealth, power, long life, and the lives of his enemies, he simply asked for wisdom; and God was so pleased with him for his simple single choice that He gave him not only wisdom, but all these other blessings also. Solomon became renowned for superhuman wisdom, and, in this book of Proverbs, we have some of the utterances of that wisdom, crystalized in the form of these short, sententious words, which have been well called "pearls at random strung."

It is said that the people of Scotland are accustomed to carry in their vest pockets a small copy of the book of Proverbs, as a sort of "vade mecum," a kind of manual of practical wisdom, for the guidance of their everyday life.

This book reveals to us a phase of life that is extremely practical and important, and shows us the teachings and workings of the Holy Ghost as they affect our everyday

life. The key-word to this whole book is the word Wisdom. It occurs scores of times.

It is a peculiar Hebrew word, and in these pages it becomes personified until it is really a proper name. It is very much like another term applied to our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament; namely, the Word, or Logos, introduced to us in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. Indeed, the Word in John and Wisdom in Proverbs are really the same Person, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, revealed in these ancient pages in His primeval glory. But the Lord Jesus Christ always stands connected with the Holy Spirit, who reveals Him, and who filled Him, and spake and wrought through Him during His earthly ministry; so that Wisdom in the book of Proverbs is not only the personification of Jesus Christ but also of the blessed Holy Ghost.

Let us look at some of the pictures of this blessed Person in these ancient pages.

I.

First, we see Him in His personal and primeval glory. This is unfolded in the sublime vision of the eighth chapter of Proverbs. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old." This blessed Person is older than the creation. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world."

Next, we see Him taking part in the work of creation. "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his de-

cree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."

Oh, what depths of light these strange illuminated verses pour upon the fellowship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the remote eternal ages! And, oh, what love to our poor human race these words reveal, "Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men"!

This blessed Christ, this blessed Comforter, who seeks your love, is no less than the second and third Persons of the Eternal Godhead. By them these heavens were made and this earth was formed. All the majesty of nature is their handiwork. All the wisdom of the ages has come from their eternal mind. Not only do they represent the wisdom and power of God, but they represent a love that has thought of us from the very beginning, and will love us to the end.

When this world was made, when the mountains were settled and the fountains and the rivers were opened, God was thinking of us, the Holy Ghost was planning for our happiness and welfare.

The whole material universe, the whole structure of nature, the whole economy of the ages was planned with a view to our creation, our redemption, our eternal glory. Redemption is no after-thought of God; but when He made this earth, and settled the stars in their orbits, He did it with a view to man's creation and future destiny. Oh, surely we can trust Him with our future when we think of His eternal past! Oh, surely we need not hesitate to commit our destiny to those Almighty hands, that have spanned these heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and to that heart of eternal love that loved us from the first of time, and loves us to the last!

But not only do we see His part in creation, but also

in providence. "By me," he says, "kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." His is the wisdom that has inspired every high and mighty thought of man; His is the fire that has kindled every touch of human genius. He is the foundation of all life, and truth, and wisdom, and power; and He offers to be at once our wisdom, our guide, our power, and our all-sufficiency.

Surely we may well heed His gentle voice, as He calls to us in the light of all this record of glory: "Now, therefore, hearken unto me, ye children; for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not; for whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain the favor of the Lord, but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death."

II.

The next chapter reveals to us this divine Wisdom building her house, hewing out her seven pillars, killing her sacrifices, spreading her table, inviting her guests, and calling her friends to the banquet of her bounty and grace. This, also, is a picture of the Holy Ghost. The house that she is building is the Church of Christ. The seven pillars that stand in the front are truth, righteousness, life, faith, love, power, and hope. The sacrifice is that of Christ, our great atonement; and the banquet prepared is the feast of His love, the Living Bread which He Himself provides, and the wine of joy and blessing that comes from the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. Into this blessed house of mercy and unto this table of every heavenly blessing, the Holy Spirit is inviting a starving world.

In contrast with this blessed woman, who stands in the front of the picture, there is another woman revealed in the closing verses. It is the woman that so often

appears in the pictures of Proverbs, that evil woman who sits in the highway of life calling to the passers-by to partake of her unhallowed joy, inviting the foolish and the simple to partake of her forbidden pleasures, saying to them, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." But, alas! there is an awful skeleton behind that door, and a fearful cry that comes from that house of folly and sin, for the prophet tells us "that the dead are there; and her guests are in the depths of hell."

So the two houses stand face to face on the highway of life; the heavenly house, with the Holy Ghost standing at its door and inviting in the children of sin and sorrow, and saying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, . . . come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" And right across the way, with the multitude surging by and pressing in, is the house of pleasure, the house of shame, the house of sin, whose steps are hard by the gates of hell.

III.

We turn back to the first chapter of Proverbs, and we have another picture of Wisdom as an impersonation of the Holy Ghost. She is standing now in the streets of the great city, in the entering in of the gates, in the places of public concourse, and calling to the passing crowd as they go heedlessly by, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." This is the Holy Ghost pleading with a lost, perishing world. This is the Spirit of God, in the messengers of the Gospel, inviting men to turn to God. This is the vision

of divine mercy trying to save men through the message of the Gospel.

Notice that she does not stand behind a pulpit railing and inside upon the marble steps of a splendid cathedral. This was the way that Isaiah prophesied, that Jonah preached, that Jesus preached, and that Paul often proclaimed the Gospel.

We cannot wait for a sinful world to come to our doors. We must go out quickly, and constrain them to come in; and if we are filled with the Holy Ghost, our cry, like Wisdom's, will still be heard in the streets, and amid the concourse of crowds, and at the entering in of the gates. It is the same old cry, "Repent"; "Turn you at my reproof." It is the call to men to turn from sin and turn to God; and the promise comes with it that God will give His Spirit to the returning sinner, and enable him to repent, believe, and obey.

Oh, is there any sinful soul listening to this message or reading these lines? He calls to thee, "Turn you at my reproof," and He will pour out His Spirit upon you as you put yourself in the place of blessing, and He will make known His words unto you, and lead you into all truth as you follow on and obey the light that He has already given you. But there is the same solemn warning to those that refuse to repent and believe. Oh, how sad and solemn is this warning cry, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would have none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you." Oh, how dark the angry cloud!

And then there comes a strange and awful change in the structure of the sentence; from the second person it changes to the third person. It is no longer you, but they; for God has now gotten so far away that He

is speaking to the poor lost soul no more, but only speaking about it. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." This is still the Holy Spirit's solemn voice to all who reject His message and refuse the Gospel of His grace.

But as the storm cloud sweeps away, the rainbow rises upon its last dark shadow, a rainbow of promise to those who have heeded His warning and have hearkened to His voice. God grant, brother, that it may be His word to you, and thou even yet shall turn at His reproof. "Whoso hearkenth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil." Blessed promise; saved from all evil, saved even from its shadow and from its touch.

IV.

How shall we find the truth? How shall we receive this heavenly wisdom? The answer is given in the second chapter of Proverbs and the first nine verses. "If thou will receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Here is the secret of divine teaching, deep earnestness and singleness of purpose, and perseverance of pursuit; the ears, the heart, the whole being must be yielded up. We must desire God above everything, and seek Him as men search for treasures and mines, for silver and for gold.

God has hidden every precious thing in such a way that it is a reward to the diligent, a prize to the earnest, and a disappointment to the slothful soul. All nature is arrayed against the lounger and the idler. The nut is hidden in its thorny case; the pearl is buried beneath the ocean wave; the gold is imprisoned in the rocky bosom of the mountain; the gem is found only after you crush the rock that incloses it; the very soil gives its harvests as the reward of industry to the laboring husbandman. So truth and God must be earnestly sought. "They that seek shall find; to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

The Holy Ghost is given in His fullest measure to deep earnestness and singleness of purpose and desire. You cannot have the higher things of God without the sacrifice of everything else. "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung," "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." This is the true Spirit of divine attainment. The prize is not for all. All run, but one receiveth the prize. God give us the diligence, the singleness, the self-sacrifice, the concentration of desire, purpose, and every power upon the one thing which really means all things, and we, too, shall find that God is waiting to reward the true heart with Himself. It is as true as ever, "ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

V.

The message of wisdom to the seeker and searcher after treasure is found in Proverb 3:13-18, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and

in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her."

Then again, in chapter 8:10, 11 we find: "Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."

And in verses 18-21 we read: "Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, . . . and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; that I may cause them that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures."

These are some of the treasures which this heavenly wisdom has to bestow upon those who truly seek her.

The keynote of the whole lesson was given in Solomon's own life. He had the wisdom to choose wisdom and wisdom only, and God added to him all the things he did not choose. It is still true for us that, if we will choose the Holy Ghost, He will become to us the sum and substance of all good things.

He will be to us peace and happiness, joy and rest, health and strength, providence and protection, guidance and provision, freedom from fear and care, and all the gifts and blessings which God can bestow upon a trusting heart.

Like the widow's pot of oil, the Holy Spirit in us will be the equivalent of everything that heart can desire or life can need. God help us to make the wise and happy choice, and have all in Him and Him in all; and, as we seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all things shall be added unto us.

This was where Solomon began his illustrious career. Happy would it have been for him if he had ended

where he began. Alas! God's very blessing became a snare. His heart turned away from the source of all his blessings to the blessing themselves. His affections were set on the things that surrounded him, his wives, his friends, his treasures, perhaps his own wisdom; and he sank from the Creator to the creature, from the height of wisdom to the depths of folly, shame, and sorrow.

Alas! Moses had to fail to show that the law made nothing perfect, and Solomon had to fail to show that the highest wisdom of man is insufficient for the child of God. Thank God, "a greater than Solomon is here," the Lord Jesus Christ; not wisdom but Himself, the wise One; not holiness but Himself the Holy One, not our best but Himself within us to be His best.

Let us receive Christ the wisdom of God, and let it be true of us, that "of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

The blessed Holy Ghost is waiting to bring Him into our hearts, and to reveal Him and unfold Him in our life, the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the Light of the World; and "He that followeth him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STILL, SMALL VOICE.

"And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still, small voice.

"And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?"—1 Kings 19: 11-13.

THIS beautiful expression, "A still, small voice," has almost come to be recognized as one of the names of the Holy Spirit. The whole scene is a fine illustration of the Spirit's working not only in the ages and dispensations, but in the experience of every individual heart.

The scene is a most dramatic one. Elijah had just reached the climax of his marvelous ministry. In that magnificent scene on Carmel we behold him in the very zenith of his career. God has answered his faith and prayer by the descending fire. The whole nation has been swayed at his will, and the very king is helpless as a child at his bidding; while the prophets of Baal, unable to resist the storm of popular enthusiasm, have been swept away by a stroke of judgment. Even the very heavens that have been closed for years have opened the flood-gates at the prophet's command, and, like a commander-in-chief of the armies of earth and heaven, Elijah has led the victorious procession to the very gates of the capital. But now another scene occurs as dramatic as the first.

There is one other heart in Israel as thoroughly possessed of the devil as Elijah was possessed of the Holy Ghost. She hears the startling tidings without the quiver of a muscle or a nerve, and with a face of flint and a heart of steel, she speaks but one sentence, of fierce, defiant threatening, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." It was a well directed shot from the batteries of the pit. In a moment it had done its fearful work, and the prophet of fire was broken like a child. There is something almost ludicrous in the graphic description of his flight, "Elijah arose and went for his life"; nor did he stop till he had reached the utmost confines of the land, away down at Beersheba. Nor even there did he linger, but, leaving his servant, he hastened on across the desert, until, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, he sank on the sand, and lay down beneath a juniper tree with one gasp of hopeless despair, "Lord, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers."

God tenderly nursed and cherished His weary child, put him to sleep, then awoke him and fed him by angel hands, until he was strong enough for his farther journey. Then He sent him on to Horeb, the Mount of God.

There, on some mountain crag and at the entrance of a cave, he waited for the message of his Lord. His spirit was all agitated and chafed. He felt his life was a failure, and he longed for power to accomplish the things for which he felt unable. Perhaps he even thought that if he could rule the world for a little how different things would be. He was just in that mood where he wanted something to happen. Anything was better than this silence, and the very war of the elements would seem to such a spirit a luxury of rest.

It was not long before his thought was fulfilled, and God began to speak to him through the voice of nature. First came the mighty earthquake, heaving the solid

ground, tearing the rocks asunder and making the desert's bosom heave like the billows of the ocean, till it seemed that he himself must be torn from his resting place, or engulfed in the awful chasms that were opening around him on every side. But he looked upon the whole scene unmoved. There was nothing in it to touch his spirit; the earthquake came and went, and he felt that "the Lord was not in the earthquake."

Next came the wild tornado, filling the air with clouds of sand, sweeping through the mountains, and tearing the solid rocks from their base and hurling the forests into the abysses below, while the air reverberated with the crashing thunder, and quivered with the awful lightning. His ears were stunned with the tempest's awful roar; but through all the wild confusion the prophet stood unmoved. Perhaps his fiery spirit was even rested by the elemental war. There was nothing in it that spoke to his deeper heart. The whirlwind passed; but "the Lord was not in the whirlwind."

Then came the fire. Perhaps it was the thunderbolt of the sky; perhaps it was some flame caused by the lightning stroke, kindling the forests and sweeping over the mountains, with fiery blaze; or, perhaps, it was some supernatural and awful flame, falling from the skies, quivering before his gaze like the fire that came down on Sinai ages before, when Moses received the law. But even this did not blanch his cheek nor move his heart; he gazed upon it with his spirit still unbroken, and his heart chafing as before. And then, like the hush that comes before the storm, or like the emphatic pause in some musical strain, there came an awful stillness, and there fell upon his ear a strange and "still, small voice," or as the New Version expresses it, "A sound of gentle stillness," softer than evening bells, sweeter than a mother's tones, gentler than music's tenderest notes. Perhaps it spoke as much to the senses of his soul as to his outward ear; but there was something

in it so deep, so tender, so penetrating that it thrilled his inmost being. It broke his whole spirit into tenderness and awe, and, gathering his mantle about him, he crept into the cave, and fell upon his face at the feet of God to listen to His message. The fiery heart at length is subdued, the mighty will is broken, the stern prophet is like a little child.

What is the meaning of all this wondrous drama?

I.

ELIJAH'S LESSON.

In the first place, it has a meaning for Elijah himself. He needed to be quiet, he needed to find that the forces that he was longing for were not the highest forces at God's command, and that even his own stern, strong nature needed to be subdued and taught the deepest power of gentleness and love.

II.

ELIJAH AND ELISHA.

Secondly, it had a yet higher meaning: it was a sort of picture of the two ministries of Elijah and Elisha. His was but a temporary dispensation; he came as the winter before the spring, as the plow before the sower, as the storm before the shower. His was the ministry of judgment and destruction. But the sunshine of spring is stronger than the storms of winter, and the little seed that drops into the soil is mightier than the plowshare that digs the furrow or the dynamite that blasts the rocks. So the gentle ministry of Elisha which was to follow was more mighty and more fruitful than all the destructive miracles of the great Elijah. He had his place; but the earthquake, the whirlwind and the fire of his awful judgments had to pass away, and "the still, small voice" of Elisha's gentler teachings and miracles of grace had to come instead.

III.

THE NEW DISPENSATION.

All this was prophetic of a yet higher era and a grander transaction. For Elijah and his ministry were typical of the law and the dispensation of Moses, while Elisha was the type of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel of His grace. And so the scene on Horeb is a representation of the difference between Law and Grace, Judgment and Mercy, the Old Dispensation and the New.

God had already proved how much, or rather how little, discipline can do to perfect human character and lead to lasting righteousness.

All that suffering and chastening can accomplish to purify a people was done for ancient Israel. What can ever surpass the pathetic story of Israel's fall, Judah's captivity, and Jerusalem's doom? But alas! how transitory the effect upon the character of the nation! They wept, they suffered, they died, they left the awful record burned into the very heart of the nation; but the next generation went on repeating the sins and follies of their fathers, and God could only cry, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores."

Thank God, there is a better way. The Gospel of His grace, the gentleness of His love, and the power of His Holy Spirit, have accomplished what law and terror never could while they wrought alone. "The still, small voice" of Jesus' love is mightier than all the thunder of Mount Sinai's law, or Assyrian or Chaldean armies. The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did. "The earthquake, the whirlwind, and the fire" have gone, but "the still,

small voice'' of Calvary and Pentecost is speaking to the hearts of millions, and speaking them back to God and righteousness and heaven.

IV.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL.

The scene at Horeb is often repeated in our individual life. We, too, have to pass through the earthquake, the whirlwind, and the fire in our vain search for God; and, at last, we find Him as the still, small voice in the depths of our soul. Perhaps the experience comes through great trial, outward or inward sufferings, tests that rend our very heart and crush our spirit. But the suffering has no saving power. The human heart can be torn to pieces, and yet every single piece be as full of pride and rebellion as the whole.

It needs the quiet divine influence of the Holy Spirit to change the heart and sanctify the soul. Suffering without the Holy Ghost is the saddest thing on earth. Trials unsanctified are like the lightning strokes that blight but cannot bless.

Sometimes it is not so much external suffering as a struggle within the secret soul itself to find God and peace. Oh, how we labor and long and try! But the best result of all our struggles is to show their own fruitlessness and to lay us helpless and silent before the feet of Christ; and then we awake in the arms of His love and power. And as we awake, we find that there is so little in the new experience that is tangible or strongly marked. In fact, the most frequent experience is to find that we really have come into nothingness. The stillness is so quiet that there is often the absence of all self-consciousness and feeling, and even the presence of God is ''a still, small voice'' so quiet that we have to hush every other sound before we can hear it.

Indeed, the first experience is often one of great

emptiness, bareness, and nothingness, and one is apt to be disappointed, and to say, "Is this all that is meant by the rest of faith?" But we soon find that the nothingness of self is but the beginning of God's all-sufficiency, and as we are willing to rest in our nothingness and His all-sufficiency, we soon begin to know the sweetness and the power of that voice.

V.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE VOICE OF GOD.

The keynote of all this wondrous story is THE VOICE. The earthquake had a sound, but it had no voice. The tempest and whirlwind could make a mighty noise, but there was no voice. The fire could speak through the sense of vision, and fill the soul with awe, but it had no voice to speak to the heart. But "the still, small voice" had behind it an intelligent mind, a living personality, a loving heart, and it was mightier than all the lifeless forces which had gone before.

Oh, the power of a voice! How it lingers in our memory! How certain tones arrest our attention and wake up all the old chords of the past! How that voice speaks to us of the difference between nature and revelation, between the language of the earth and sky, and the language of God's precious Word! God hath spoken once in the voice of creation, but it is only like the inarticulate language of the earthquake, the whirlwind, and the fire. God hath spoken a second time, in the voice of His Holy Word and His blessed Son, and this is the message that brings light and life and salvation to man.

A voice is more than a message, more than a printed page, more than even an inspired book. A voice means the presence of the person who speaks, and his personal and living words to us. And so God speaks to us, not only in the Bible, but by His own personal voice. His

sheep know His voice, and "a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

There is more in the Bible and in the revelation of Christ than merely a message of truth. It is also a personal message of love. He has a special voice for every one of His children, and it is our privilege to know His voice.

Oh, how that voice can speak to us! It is not an audible voice; it does not reach our outward senses; it would not be possible to explain to a stranger how it makes itself understood in the heart; but, as we kneel in prayer and ask His counsel, as we come with our heavy-laden hearts and throw ourselves upon His bosom for comfort; as we bring our petitions and wait for the whispered answer, how it speaks to us, how it satisfies us, how it identifies itself to us, and makes us know "it is the Lord"! How it gives its approval to the plans that He commends! How it seals the promise that is suggested to the mind, and lets it fall upon the heart like balm upon the bleeding wound! How it brings home the words that fall from the speaker's lips, and makes them God's living messages to our hearts! How it emphasizes every word we read, and how its sweet and heavenly whisper fills all our inmost being with peace and joy and life, until our glad and grateful heart can only say, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace to his people and to his saints"!

VI.

THE POWER OF GENTLENESS.

The New Version translates this phrase, "The sound of a gentle stillness." It speaks of God's gentleness. Gentleness is always an attribute of the highest natures. The bravest soldier, the loftiest character, is always the

most child-like, simple and tender. Jesus Christ was the incarnation of meekness, lowliness, and gentleness.

The apostle used this as his strongest plea when he besought His disciples "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." "I am meek and lowly in heart" was the Master's own highest claim. And this was but the ancient prophetic picture. "He shall not strive nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets; a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench."

Is there a sublimer spectacle, is there a more heart-moving sight in all history, than that patient Sufferer standing in the judgment hall or hanging upon the Cross and allowing His murderers to do their worst, answering not a word, "led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth"? The Holy Ghost, the Representative of Christ, also is gentleness itself. He came upon Jesus as the Dove, and He dwells in us as a Monitor so kind, a Comforter so tender, that we can only "grieve" and "vex" Him, but we cannot make Him angry. He appeals to our obedience by His sensitiveness to the hurt that we can give Him. Oh, let us be gentle as He; let us treat Him with the consideration that His sensitiveness should claim!

He will not force an entrance to our heart. He will not do violence to the freedom of our will. He will not compel us to do what we do not choose, nor to surrender what we want to keep. He appeals to the finest motives of our being, to the will that springs from our deepest heart, and to the obedience which we are only too glad to give.

Let us imitate His gentleness; let us ask Him to translate it into all our beings until we shall be simple, sensitive, considerate, yielded, lowly, meek and child-like, "even as He." Our faces, our manners, our tones, and

the whole complexion of our life shall be the blending of the spirit of the Lamb and the Dove.

VII.

THE POWER OF STILLNESS.

It was "a still, small voice," or "the sound of a gentle stillness." Is there any note of music in all the chorus as mighty as the emphatic pause? Is there any word in all the Psalter more eloquent than that one word, "Selah, (Pause)"? Is there anything more thrilling and awful than the hush that comes before the bursting of the tempest or the strange quiet that seems to fall upon all nature before some preternatural phenomenon or convulsion? Is there anything that can so touch our hearts as the power of stillness?

The sweetest blessing that Christ brings us is the Sabbath rest of the soul, of which the Sabbath of creation was the type; the Land of Promise, God's great object lesson. There is for the heart that will cease from itself "the peace of God that passeth all understanding"; "a quietness and confidence" which is the source of all strength; a sweet peace which "nothing can offend"; a deep rest which "the world can neither give nor take away." There is, in the deepest centre of the soul, a chamber of peace where God dwells, and where, if we will only enter in and hush every other sound, we can hear His still, small voice.

There is, in the swiftest wheel that revolves upon its axis, a place in the very centre where there is no movement at all; and so in the busiest life there may be a place where we dwell alone with God in eternal stillness.

This is the only way to know God. "Be still, and know that I am God." "God is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a

little book which became one of the turning points of my life. It was called "True Peace." It was an old mediæval message with but one thought, which was this that God was waiting in the depths of my being to talk to me if I would only get still enough to hear His voice.

I thought this would be a very easy matter, and so I began to get still. But I had no sooner commenced than a perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some of them were my own voice, some of them were my own questions, some of them were my own cares, and some of them were my very prayers. Others were suggestions of the tempter and voices from the world's turmoil. Never before did there seem so many things to be done, to be said, to be thought; and in every direction I was pushed, and pulled, and greeted with noisy acclamations and unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them, and to answer some of them, but God said, "Be still, and know that I am God." Then came the conflict of thoughts for the morrow, and its duties and cares, but God said, "Be still." And then there came the very prayers which my restless heart wanted to press upon Him, but God said, "Be still." And as I listened and slowly learned to obey and shut my ears to every sound, I found after awhile that when the other voices ceased, or I ceased to hear them, there was a still, small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power and comfort. As I listened it became to me the voice of prayer, and the voice of wisdom, and the voice of duty. I did not need to think so hard, or pray so hard, or trust so hard, but that "still, small voice" of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God's prayer in my secret soul, was God's answer to all my questions, was God's life and strength for soul and body, and became the substance of all knowledge, and all

prayer, and all blessing; for it was the living God Himself as my Life and my All.

Beloved, this is our spirit's deepest need. It is thus that we learn to know God; it is thus that we receive spiritual refreshing and nutriment; it is thus that our heart is nourished and fed; it is thus that we receive the Living Bread; it is thus that our very bodies are healed, and our spirit drinks in the life of our risen Lord, and we go forth to life's conflicts and duties like the flower that has drunk in, through the shades of night, the cool and crystal drops of dew. But as the dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dews of His grace never come to the restless soul.

We cannot go through life strong and fresh on express trains, with ten minutes for lunch. We must have quiet hours, secret places of the Most High, times of waiting upon the Lord, when we renew our strength and learn to mount up on wings as eagles, and then come back, to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint.

The best thing about this stillness is that it gives God a chance to work. "He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his"; and when we cease from our works, God works in us; and when we cease from our thoughts, God's thoughts come into us; when we get still from our restless activity, God worketh in us both to will and do of His good pleasure, and we have but to work it out.

Beloved, let us take His stillness, let us dwell in "the secret place of the Most High," let us enter into God and His eternal rest, let us silence the other sounds, and then we can hear "the still, small voice."

There is another kind of stillness, the stillness that lets God work for us, and hold our peace; the stillness that ceases from its contriving, and its self-vindication, and its expedients of wisdom and forethought, and lets

God provide, and answer the unkind word and the cruel blow in His own unfailing, faithful love. How often we lose God's interposition by taking up our own cause and striking for our own defence.

Never shall I forget a little scene which happened not long ago. A quiet Christian girl was sitting at a table among a party of friends, who were discussing a Christian work in which she was deeply interested. Some of the criticisms were very severe, and, as she thought, unjust and unfair. She said a few simple words to correct the statements; but then, as the criticism, more and more severe, went on, she simply held her peace. I saw the mantling brow and the tear just springing to her eyes, and I thought how easy it would have been for her to give the quick reply, and answer just as sharply as she might have done. But the grace of God had become ascendant in that young heart; the Holy Ghost was on the Throne. She sat in silence, and simply suffered and waited. After a few moments I saw she could stand the struggle no longer, and she gently and lovingly rose and left the table and went to her room to lay her burden upon the bosom for her Saviour.

In a moment it all flashed upon the other person, who loved her very tenderly. He saw how he had wounded her; he knew how she would have answered months before. The sweetness and gentleness of her spirit cut him to the very heart, and taught him a lesson that he was manly and noble enough fully to acknowledge. Never again will his lips utter those hasty words, and never will he forget that spectacle of gentleness and silence.

It was her best vindication, and it made up for her, besides, a jewel of unfading lustre in the crown above.

There is no spectacle in all the Bible so sublime as the silent Saviour answering not a word to the men that were maligning Him, and whom He could have laid

prostrate at His feet by one look of divine power or one word of fiery rebuke. But He let them say and do their worst, and He stood in the power of stillness—God's holy, silent Lamb.

God give to us this silent power, this mighty self-surrender, this conquered spirit which will make us "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Let our voice and our life speak like "the still, small voice" of Horeb and as "the sound of a gentle stillness." And after the heat and strife of earth are over, men will remember us as we remember the morning dew, the gentle light and sunshine, the evening breeze, the Lamb of Calvary, and the gentle, Holy, Heavenly Dove.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE POT OF OIL.

"Tell me: what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil.

"Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside all that which is full.

"So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

"And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel: and he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

"Then she came and told the man of God: and he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children upon the rest."—2 Kings 4: 2-7.

THE events of Elisha's life are more like those of the life of Christ than are any others in the Old Testament. Just as Elijah represented the Spirit of the Lord and the ministry of John the Baptist, a ministry of judgment and fire, so Elisha represented the ministry of Jesus Christ in its gentleness, benignity and grace; and very many of his beautiful miracles are distinctly parallel to the miracles of our Lord, while they preach the same lesson and breathe the same spirit of love and graciousness.

The passage before us is a striking object lesson of the Holy Ghost in His all-sufficiency for the supplying of every source of need.

I.

HER NEED.

First, we have, in the case of this poor widow, an example of great need. Her situation was one of debt,

danger, distress, and of complete helplessness. She had no one to go to but God, and, unless delivered by Him, her situation must have become one of the greatest extremity. It represents the very worst and most helpless state in which a child of God can be found. But such a situation is often the greatest blessing that can come to us, because it throws us upon God, and compels us to trust in the all-sufficiency of His grace.

Nearly all the great examples of faith and victorious grace which we find in the Scriptures came out of situations of extremity and distress. God loves hard places, and faith is usually born of danger and extremity.

It was thus that Jacob was transformed from Jacob to Israel in the conflict at Peniel. It was thus that Israel was awakened to claim the great redemption from the bondage of Egypt, by the doubling of the tale of brick and by the heated furnace of iron. It was thus that David learned to know his God, and was able to testify, "Thou hast known my soul in adversity." Let us not be discouraged by difficulties, nor regard them as always misfortunes; but rather let us receive them as challenges to our faith and opportunities given to us by our God to show that there is nothing too hard for Him.

II.

HER RESOURCES.

Was there, then, nothing left for her? Was she entirely without resources? "Tell me, what hast thou in the house?" And she answered, "Thy servant hath nothing, save a pot of oil." To her that seemed nothing, and yet it contained the supply of all her need. God loves to utilize and economize all the resources which He has already given to us. Just as a master workman can do a great deal of excellent work with very common tools, so God can work with very simple instruments; but He wants us to utilize what He has already

given. It was very little that Moses had, but that little rod was sufficient to divide the Red Sea and to break the power of Pharoah. It was very little that the lad on the Galilean shore had that day; but his five loaves and two small fishes were sufficient to feed the five thousand, when they were given to Jesus and placed at His service. Our least is enough for God, if we allow Him complete control.

But that little pot of oil was not a little thing. It represented the power of the Holy Ghost, the infinite attribute of God Himself.

We need not stop to prove that oil is the Scriptural symbol of the Holy Spirit. This little vessel of oil represented the presence and the power of the Spirit, which every believer may have, and in some measure does have, and which, if we only know how to use Him, is equal to every possible situation and need of our Christian life. But in how many cases is this an unrealized power and an unemployed force?

There is a grim story told of a poor Scotchwoman who went to her pastor in her extremity, and told him of her poverty. He kindly asked her if she had no friend nor member of her family who could support or help her. She said she had a son, a bonny lad, but he was in India, in the service of the government. "But does he not write to you?" "Oh, yes; he often writes me, and sends the kindest letters, and such pretty pictures in them. But I am too proud to tell him how poor I am, and, of course, I have not expected him to send me money." "Would you mind showing me some of the pictures?" said the minister. And so Janet went to her Bible, and brought out from between the leaves a great number of Bank of England notes, laid away with the greatest care. "These," she said, "are the pictures." The minister smiled, and said, "Janet, you are richer than I am. These are bank notes; and every one of them might have been turned into money, and you might

have had all your needs supplied. You have had a fortune in your Bible without knowing it."

Alas, beloved, many of us have fortunes in our Bibles without knowing it, or without using our infinite resources. The Holy Spirit is given to us to be used for every sort of need; and yet, with all the power of heaven at our call, many of us are going about in starvation, simply because we do not know our treasure, and do not use our redemption rights. "Know ye not," the apostle asks us, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" If we but use the power that is given within our breast, behind the name of Jesus and the promises of God, we would fail no more, we would fear no more, we would no more be a reflection upon our Saviour and a dishonor to His name, as well as a discouragement to the world, but we would rise up into victory, and cry, "Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph, in Christ."

What is the difference between Japan and China today? It is this: while Japan has learned the secrets of modern progress, and is using them in still victorious warfare, China does not know what other races have learned. What is the difference between our age and the age of our grandfather? It is simply that we have learned from nature. We are using the great secrets of steam, electricity, and the various appliances of practical science in all our industrial life, so that one man can do today what it took twenty to do in the days of our fathers. The business man can sit in his office and annihilate both space and time as he talks through his telephone to the most distant parts of the land, and through his phonograph into the ears of the coming generation.

What was the matter with Hagar in her bitter sorrow? Nothing but this; she could not see the fountain that lay so near, she and her child were perishing with thirst. There was no need that the angel should create

a fountain; he needed only to open Hagar's eyes and let her see it and drink of it.

There was no need that God should make a spring of sweetness at Marah's waters; all that was needed was to show to Moses the branch of healing that was already there. As he plunged it into the waters the people were healed.

There was no need that an army of angels should come to the help of Elisha on the mountainside. The angels were already there; all that was needed was that the eyes of Elisha's servant might be opened to see the heavenly army that surrounded and defended them. In like manner the fountain of life is waiting for us to drink; the waters and the branch of healing are at hand, the angelic army are all around us. All we need is to see them, to know that they are there, to realize our redemption rights, and then to claim them and triumph in His name. God is saying to us, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come." Christ has appeared, the Holy Ghost has come, and all that we need to do is to know and receive and use the great divine commission.

III.

THE CONDITIONS OF RECEIVING AND REALIZING DIVINE HELP.

First, she, the woman, was directed to make room. She must get vessels, empty vessels, to hold the supply which was about to be revealed. Our greatest need is to make room for God. Indeed, God has to make room for Himself by creating new vessels of need. Every trial that comes to us is but a need for Him to fill and an opportunity for Him to show what He can be to us and do for us. But it is not enough to have need; we must also have empties. We must realize our needs, and we must realize that He alone can supply them. We must be emptied of self-consciousness

and dependence upon man; and as we lie fully at His feet, He will prove

"How wise, how strong His hand."

Again, there must be faith to count upon God and go forward expecting Him to meet our needs. This woman did not wait till the oil was running over from her little pot; but providing the vessels in advance, she acted as though she had an unbounded supply. So it was that the disciples had to go forward to feed the multitude with their five loaves and two fishes, and had to count upon the supply which had not yet appeared. We must anticipate God's fulfillment and trust Him sufficiently to pay in advance; then He will make good our expectations in His glorious and ever-flowing grace.

Again, we must have not only faith, but unselfish love. These were borrowed vessels. The needs were not all her own; and, no doubt, as the vessels went home they did not go home empty. God loves to give to us when we are, like God, receiving that we may give to others.

The most blessed thing about the blessed God must be this, that He has no needs of His own; but that He is always giving, always blessing, and always seeking some new channel through which to bless and to pour out the fullness of His life. If we would receive that fullness, we, God like, must be great givers. The secret of joy is to want nothing for ourselves, to be rich in dispensing His grace and blessing, to live for others, and to be ever filling the vessels of need from the world around us with the overflowing of His heart and of ours. The beauty of the parable of the friend at midnight lies chiefly in this, that he wanted the loaves from his friend that he might give them to another that was in need. Likewise, when we come for grace and help to the helpless, we shall find that God will open

the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing until there shall not be room to receive it.

Again, the woman's faith was necessary. She must show it by beginning to pour out the contents of the little pot into the larger vessel. As she poured, the oil continued to flow and overflow until every vessel was filled, and it might have been flowing still if there had been room enough to hold its multiplying stream.

So faith must go forward and act out its confidence and risk itself by doing something and putting itself into the place where God must meet it with actual help. It was when the water at Cana was poured out that it became wine. It was when the man stretched out his hand that it was healed. It was as the lepers went on their way that they were made whole. It was as the father went back to his home that the messenger was sent to tell him that his son was alive.

There is a beautiful expression in Hebrews, to the effect that the ancient fathers were persuaded of the promises and "embraced them," or rather as the new version translates it "ran to meet them." Let us run to meet the promises of God. Let us measure up to them. Let us act our confidence, and God will meet us more than half way with His faithfulness and grace.

There is yet another lesson, the most important of all: "Go, sell the oil, . . . and live thou and thy children of the rest." The oil was but the representative value, and was convertible into everything that she could need. It was equivalent to currency, food, houses, clothes, lands, anything and everything that possessed value and could meet her need. Thus is the Holy Ghost convertible into everything that we can require.

There are parallel passages in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke which teach a great lesson. In the one passage it reads, "if ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

In the parallel passage in the other Gospel, instead of the Holy Spirit, it reads, "Give good things to them that ask him." That is to say, the Holy Ghost gives all good things, and He is equivalent to anything and everything that we need. Do we need salvation? He will lead us to Christ, and bring us to witness of our acceptance. Do we need peace? He will bring into our hearts the peace of God. Do we need purity? He will sanctify us and "cause us to walk in His statutes, and keep His judgments to do them." Do we need strength? He is the Spirit of power. Do we need light? He is the Teacher and Counsellor and Guide. Do we need faith? He is the Spirit of faith. Or love? By Him "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." Would we pray and have our prayer answered? "The Spirit itself maketh intercession within us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Do we need health? He will quicken our mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in us. Do we need courage? He will give us faith, faith that shall claim the supply of all our needs by believing prayer. Do we need circumstances changed by the mighty workings of God's providence? He is the Spirit of power. The hearts of men are in His hands and He can turn them as the rivers of water, and make all things work together for good to them that love God.

He is the Almighty Spirit, the Great Executive of the Godhead, and with Him in our hearts, God can do exceeding abundantly for us "according to the power that worketh in us."

Oh, let us use the Holy Ghost, not merely for spells of emotional feeling or what we call spiritual experience, but in the whole circle of our life as the Executor of God, the all-sufficient Leader of our victorious faith!

There is yet another lesson taught us here; namely, that we may increase and multiply the effectiveness of the Spirit of God in our lives, by wisely using the power and grace He gives us.

The idea of trading with our spiritual gifts is brought out more fully in the New Testament in the great parable of the pounds, where the one pound that represented, no doubt, the gift of the Holy Ghost, is increased to ten by wise and profitable use. So we can take the Holy Ghost, and as we obey Him and learn to use Him, and become subject to the great laws which regulate His operations, we shall find that there is scarcely a limit to the extent of His working and the sufficiency of His power. All that is needed is room, opportunity, vessels of need, and faith to go forward in dependence upon Him.

The oil did not stop until the woman stopped; God was still working when her faith reached its limit. The same God is working still, and our faith will stop long before His willingness and His resources are exhausted. Shall we trust more boldly? Shall we recognize every difficulty, every situation which conveys an opportunity of proving Him yet more gloriously; and shall we go on from strength to strength until every adversary has been subjected and compelled to help us, till every mountain of difficulty has become a mountain of praise, and every hard place in life a vessel into which God may pour the overflowing fullness of His all-sufficiency?

Beloved, as we step out into the future, shall we forget the experiences we have had and press on to higher and greater? Shall we leave the vessels that have been satisfied, and bring new vessels for him to fill? Shall we forget the blessings we have had from the Holy Ghost, and think rather of those we have not yet had? And shall we go on to prove His mighty promise, "I will open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing until there shall not be room enough to receive it"?

CHAPTER XV.

THE VALLEY OF DITCHES.

"Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches.

"For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.

"And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord: He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand."—II. Kings 3: 16-18.

THIS is another of Elisha's parabolic miracles; for it was both a parable of divine teaching and a miracle of divine working. It is full of practical lessons about the Holy Spirit in our lives.

I.

A GREAT EMERGENCY.

First, we see a great emergency. The king of Israel and the king of Judah had united in a campaign against the Moabites, and in marching through the wilderness they had come into great straits. Their water supply was cut off, and they were in danger of perishing of thirst. This may represent any hard places in our lives. Such an emergency is God's opportunity of blessing, and is the only way by which many of us can ever be brought to realize the fullness of divine grace.

There was a peculiarity, however, in this trying situation to one of the party at least. To Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, it was a trouble that he had brought upon himself, and he had no one else to blame for his ill fortune. Because he had hastily and generously formed an unholy alliance with a wicked king, he was suffering on account of his forbidden act. As God has warned us to have no fellowship with wicked men,

we never can disobey this commandment, either by mixed marriages or by business partnerships, without suffering in consequence.

We see at once the difference between a wicked man and a child of God. In his extremity the wicked king of Israel gave up in despair, and never once thought of turning to God for help. He uttered a hopeless cry, and said practically, "God has brought us here to destroy us." That is the way ungodly men look at their troubles.

In contrast with him, Jehoshaphat at once thought of God and called for His servant and His message. No matter how trying our situation, no matter how much to blame we ourselves are for it, let us always go at once with it to God, and seek His direction and deliverance; and we shall never seek in vain.

Jehoshaphat called at once for the prophet of the Lord. It was a prophet he wanted. He was willing to hear God's message and to take God's way of deliverance. It is so beautiful to find that the prophet was there. Elisha was the beautiful type of the Holy Ghost and the ever present Christ. Unlike Elijah, who was the prophet of judgment and represented the law, Elisha was always among the people, helping the poor widow in her poverty, the students on the banks of the Jordan when the axe went off the handle, and even the army of his country when on this laborious and dangerous expedition. He represented that God who is always within our call and a God at hand. The very meaning of the word *Paraclete* or *Advocate* is, One near by, One we can call to our side and call upon in every time of need. Let us bring Him all our burdens; let us cast upon Him all our care; let us use Him for every emergency, and prove His all-sufficiency in every time of need.

II.

PREPARATION.

We next see the preparation for God's deliverance. First, Elisha called for a minstrel. You know that this minstrel represented the spirit of praise. Our prayers, too, should always begin with praise. If our difficulties and dangers be met with a song of believing triumph, we shall find God ready to echo it back with the song of deliverance. When we cannot pray, it is a good time to praise.

Next came the divine message, "Thus saith the Lord." God must be heard in this matter, His voice must be listened to, His message received, and His way adopted. When trouble comes we usually run in every other direction first, get everybody else's advice and help, and then at last think of appealing to heaven.

The first thing in trouble is to hearken and ask, "What saith the Lord?" What lesson is He teaching? What rebuke is He sending? What direction is He giving? What way of escape would He have us take? God has always one way out of every difficulty, and only one.

Next, they must make room for the coming blessing. "Make this valley full of ditches." One would have supposed that the valley was deep enough without the ditches. But the valley was there anyhow; the ditches must be made on purpose. It is possible to have need of God and not have room for God. These ditches represent special preparation and the opening of the channels of faith to receive the blessing.

What is a ditch? It is a great, ugly opening in the ground. There is nothing ornamental nor beautiful about it; it is just a void and empty space, a place to hold water. How shall we open the ditches for God to fill? By bringing to Him our needs, our failures, the great rents and voids and broken up places in our lives. It

is a good time at the commencement of another year to think of the places where we have come short, and the needs in our hearts that have not yet been supplied. Let us bring them to Him, and like the widow's vessels, He is able to fill them all.

The answer must be claimed by simple faith. "Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain," said the prophet, "yet that valley shall be filled with water." There was to be no outward demonstration, but it was to come quietly and without observation. This is the way God loves to bless us, and this is the way that faith must always receive the blessing. This is not, however, the way that unbelieving man likes to have it come. He would like to see wind and rain, and have a great display of outward circumstances; then he would be able to believe in the coming of the water. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe," was the Master's reproof in His own day; and it is as pertinent today as ever.

Faith, however, is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and it loves to claim the promise and rest in the Promiser, allowing Him to bring the answer in His own way and time, and counting upon it as though it were already a present fact. Shall we thus trust our God and learn to walk by faith and not by sight?

III.

THE DIVINE ANSWER.

The divine answer was not long in coming. With the morning light, lo! the ditches had disappeared and the valley was filled with water, reflecting the crimson hills of Edom from its glassy bosom, and looking to the Moabites as pools of blood.

It was water that came, and only water. That was all they wanted. Water was the symbol of the Holy

Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is all we want in our extremity and need. He will be to us answered prayer, temporal provision, spiritual supply, and all things pertaining to life and godliness.

Notice again that when the water came, the ditches disappeared from view. Likewise, when the Holy Ghost comes, our needs will be supplied, and the very remembrance of our sorrow and distress will leave us. So long as you are looking at the ditches and thinking of your desperate need, you are not filled with water. God wants so to fill you that He will even obliterate the remembrance of your sin and sorrow, and, as Job beautifully expressed it, you will remember your misery as waters that pass away.

Again, when the water came there was enough, not only for them to drink but also for their cattle and their beasts; so when God fills your life with the Holy Spirit, the blessing overflows not only to every person around you, but the very beasts that serve you will be the better for your blessing. That truckman was not far astray when he said that his horse and his dog knew that he had been converted. Oh, the groans of the irrational creation around us that are ever going up to God, because of man's sin. Oh, the blessing that will come to the whole universe when man receives his Saviour and becomes prepared to be the lord of this lower creation!

There is a very remarkable expression used respecting this glorious miracle of divine grace and bounty. "This is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord." This wonderful blessing was not, in God's estimation, anything extraordinary nor at all hard for him to do. Nor is it a great or difficult thing for Him to baptize you and me with the Holy Ghost till all our wants are supplied and all our being is filled with His blessing. We are constantly thinking of it as though it cost Him some great effort. Thousands of Christians are looking for-

ward to it at a great distance as the culminating point of life. On the contrary, it is but a light thing for God to do, and is intended to mark rather the beginning than the close of a career of usefulness.

The great purpose of Christ's coming was "that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in righteousness and holiness before him,"—not the last days, but "all the days of our life. It is not our preparation for heaven but our preparation for life.

IV.

THE GREATER BLESSING.

Next comes God's deliverance and the greater blessing which He has for them. "This is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand." This was the great purpose of their campaign and the design of God in delivering them in their peril, that they might go forward and conquer their enemies and His. This also is God's purpose in our sanctification.

He does not give us the Holy Ghost that we should receive a clean heart merely, and then spend our lives complacently looking at it and telling people about it, but that we should go forth in the power of His Spirit and His indwelling life, to conquer this world for Him. We, too, have a great foe to face and a great trust to fulfill. We are sent to conquer the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to give the Gospel to the whole inhabited earth. It is a shame that thousands of Christians should spend their lives without even claiming this baptism; and it is a far greater shame that thousands more should be occupied all their days in getting a satisfactory interest in Christ and an experience of sanctification.

What would you think of the gardener who, after spending five years in planting an orange grove in Florida, in watering, pruning, and cultivating it, should

then find that he has to spend a quarter of a century more keeping the plants in a healthy condition, without any return of fruit? You would certainly think it a poor investment. It is all right to spend a while in getting your orchard ready; but you expect this to end some day, and the trees will begin to do something better than grow, even to reward your labors with the abundant harvest.

What would you think of the manufacturer who took all the trouble to set up a water wheel, and a lot of machinery, and then simply amused himself with having the wheel turn round, without driving any machinery, or doing any practical work? God must get very tired of everlastingly keeping us in repair. Surely he has a right to expect that the time of fruit will come. God help us, beloved, to get at things and to stay at them. Keep your engine out of the repair shop. Get it in working order as quickly as you can, and then ask God to put an express train behind it, and let it run and carry its precious freight on the great highway of His holy will.

It is very miserable work to be always getting sanctified, and it is very unworthy of God's infinite grace and power. Let us get into conflict and victory and agressive work for God and this lost world, and He will surely deliver our enemies into our hand, and make us more than conquerors through Him that loved us. And then we shall find that the using of our blessing is the best way to keep it, and the running of the wheel is the surest means of keeping it from falling.

V.

THOROUGH AND FINISHED WORK.

They were commanded, as soon as they had conquered the Moabites, to do thorough work, to smite every fenced city, to spread stones upon every fertile piece of land,

and to fill up every well of water, leaving the land desolate and worthless. It was simply an illustration of thorough and completed work.

When God begins to work for us, it is time for us to work for Him, and our work should be as thorough as His. It is all folly for us to sit down and fold our arms, and say, "God will do it." We must work out our own salvation, all the more because it is God that worketh in us.

When David heard "a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees," it was the very time for him to bestir himself and do His best, for God had gone out before him to deliver his enemies into his hand. When we see the almighty working of our God, it is the very time for us to stir ourselves up to faithful co-operation and thorough work.

It was the failure of Israel to do thorough work that lost them the blessing which Joshua's conquest secured. They left some of their enemies in the land, and in due time this remnant became their masters. It is very foolish for us to leave a vestige or a trace of evil behind us. Let us do thorough work in our repentance, in our obedience, in our sanctification, in our divine healing, in our service for God.

How foolish it is for the builder to rear the costly walls and leave them unroofed; the elements will soon crumble the unprotected masonry to a heap of worthless ruins. Let us finish our work day by day. Let everything we say and do be as thorough and complete as the finished measure of the musical melody and harmony, without which the rest of the note would be thrown away. So let us live from day to day, that, when the close shall come, we shall have nothing to do but to go to our reward and say with our departing Master, "Father, I have glorified thee upon the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

Beloved, it is a time of God's mighty working in

the world and among the nations. Let it stimulate us to arouse ourselves to holy action, and to co-operate with Him in His mighty purpose of preparing the world for the speedy return of His dear Son, our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

There is "a sound of going in the mulberry trees," and the Lord has gone up before us. Let us bestir ourselves, and haste the day of our Master's coming and the cry of victory around the world and from the ranks above, "Alleluiah; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

As Dr. Chalmers has so wisely said, "Let us trust as if all depended upon God, but let us work as if all depended upon ourselves."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SPIRIT OF INSPIRATION.

"No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—2 Peter 1: 20, 21.

THIS passage directs our attention to the inspiration of the ancient prophets, and to the work of the Holy Ghost is revealing the will of God to His chosen messengers. God at sundry times and divers manners spake to our fathers by the prophets.

Divine revelation began in Eden, and God has never ceased to maintain communication with His devoted subjects. In the antediluvian and patriarchial dispensations He spake at intervals to particular men, revealing His will to them; but from the time that He called Moses to lead the chosen people out of Egypt, He has had a special class of messengers through whom He has revealed His will to His people. These have been called the prophets of the Lord. Moses was, perhaps, the first of them.

In the fourth chapter of Exodus, God distinctly calls him to this special ministry. "Now, therefore, go," He says, "and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." When afterwards He appointed Aaron to be His spokesman, He added, "Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God."

Moses recognized himself as a prophet, and said of his Antitype, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear."

The next great prophet was Samuel. Like Moses he also appeared at a special crisis in the history of his people. They had been for centuries in the deepest declension and distress. Like Luther, God's instrument in the Reformation of our own time, God sent him to call Israel back to Himself. The call of Samuel was most marked and his ministry most important. In I. Samuel 3:19-21, we read concerning him, "The Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel . . . knew that Samuel was established to a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord."

Indeed, Samuel was really the founder of the prophetic institutions and the schools of the prophets which from his time we find in Israel. No nobler race of men ever lived than the prophets of Israel. They were the only class that was true to God. The kings, with a few exceptions, were disastrous failures; and even the priesthood became subservient to a corrupt throne and a godless populace. But the prophets were God's true representatives and witnesses, and stood for righteousness and godliness in the darkest ages of God's ancient people.

When Saul failed to meet the purpose of his high calling, Samuel was still true to Jehovah. When David sank in his double crime, Nathan was there to reprove him and to bring him the message of Jehovah. When Solomon allowed his heart to be turned away from God, the prophet Abijah was there to bear God's message of warning, and to tell Jeroboam what God was about to do in rending the kingdom asunder. When Rehoboam succeeded his father and was about to ruin his kingdom

in presumptious recklessness, the prophet Shemaiah was ready to carry God's message to him and arrest him in his reckless purpose. When Jeroboam had ascended the throne of Irael and reared his idolatrous altars at Dan, there was a prophet of the Lord ready to stand before him and to warn him of God's judgment because of his idolatry. When the wicked Baasha, king of Israel, had filled his cup of sin, God had His servant, Jehu the prophet, ready to utter His message of warning and judgment against the wicked king. When Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Rehoboam, then Shemaiah the prophet was there to call the nation to repentance, and to promise them deliverance from the hand of the enemy.

When King Asa summoned his people to meet the common enemy, and to trust in the arm of Jehovah, then God sent Azariah the prophet to bear to him the message of encouragement and covenant promise; and when, later in his reign, Asa became willful and self-reliant, and turned from God to the arm of flesh, God sent Hanani the prophet to tell him of the divine displeasure and of the judgment which he was about to bring upon himself. When Jehoshaphat stood face to face with the Ammonites and Moabites in the valley of Berachah in great peril and humiliation, then God sent the prophet Jeheziel to announce the victory of faith that was to come with the morrow.

When Joash, king of Judah, turned away from God, then Zechariah, the prophet of the Lord, stood up to reprove him for his sin, and suffered martyrdom at the hands of the king and people, the first of that band of witnesses who sealed their testimony with their blood. When Ahab and Jezebel reigned in Samaria, and all Israel was given up to the worship of Baal, then Elijah appeared as God's messenger of fire to warn the people and to lead them back to their allegiance to heaven. When Elijah's ministry was completed, Elisha, coming

as the messenger of peace, for half a century guided and counselled the king and the people in the name of Jehovah, the glorious type of the coming Christ.

The brightest light of the good Hezekiah's reign was Isaiah, the prophet of the Lord. Even when Jerusalem fell, and Judah passed into captivity, Jeremiah, like a guardian angel, hovered over its dark midnight, and sought by his warning and pleading to avert its cruel fate; and then, when he could do no more, like the Master Himself, he wept over the city that he had loved. The last days of Israel were linked with the prophetic ministry of Hosea, the prophet of love. The exile of Judah was lighted up by the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel by the river Chebar, and of Daniel in far off Babylon. The days of Restoration were less dependent upon the leadership of Zerubabel than upon the prophetic ministrations of Haggai and Zechariah; and, finally, the Old Testament Dispensation was closed by Malachi, the messenger of Jehovah and the prophet of the coming age.

The very names of these prophetic messengers are beautifully significant. "Isaiah" and "Hosea" mean that God is the Saviour; "Jeremiah," God is high; "Ezekiel," God is strong; "Daniel," God is judge; "Joel," Jehovah is God; "Elijah," God is Jehovah; "Elisha," God is our Saviour. "Jonah," who stands first among the prophets whose writings are recorded, means "the Dove," and suggests the Holy Ghost in His gentle grace. "Nahum," who wrote amid the sorrows of Israel's ruin, signifies "the Comforter," and "Malachi," who was the messenger of the new dispensation, means "My messenger." Thus were their very names and lives consistent with their high character and their divine commission.

The prophets of Israel may be divided into two classes; first, those whose lives alone are recorded; and, secondly, those whose writings have come down to us. The latter company may again be divided into six classes.

First, we have Jonah, standing alone as the pioneer and the earliest of the prophets whose writings are recorded. Next, we have the prophets who were connected with Israel's last days; namely, Hosea, Amos, and Nahum. Thirdly, we have the prophets connected with Judah from the reign of Hezekiah for about two generations and about a century before the fall of Judah. These were Joel, Micah, and Isaiah. They lived in the palmy days of Judah's kingdom, and were sent to hold the nation back from the captivity to which they were hastening. Through their ministry the catastrophe that came to Israel was averted from Judah for more than a century. It came at last, however, and we have a fourth group of prophets, who cluster around the sinking fortunes of the kingdom of Judah and fall of Jerusalem. They are Jeremiah, Obadiah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk.

We have a fifth class a little later, who may be called the prophets of the exile. They prophesied in captivity. They are Ezekiel and Daniel, the one in the country, the other in the capital of Babylon.

Finally, we have the prophets of the Restoration, the men who counselled and comforted the returning bands who went back to rebuild the temple and city of Jerusalem. They were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. These sixteen names constitute the glorious company of the prophets whose writings have come to us. They are commonly divided into the major and minor prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel belonging to the former, and all the others to the latter class. They all claimed to be the special messengers of Jehovah, and they were all accredited by His signal presence and power. They belong to that class of whom our text says they "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The same language might yet more emphatically be applied to the prophets and writers of the New Testament.

And so we come to the great subject of the inspira-

tion of the Holy Scriptures and the messengers of God's will in the various dispensations. Let us briefly consider; first, the nature of inspiration; secondly, its evidences; and, thirdly, the responsibility that it lays upon us.

I.

As to the nature of inspiration what do we mean by the inspired prophets and the inspired Scriptures?

The Scripture writers themselves settle this question. There is no doubt that they claim for themselves, and the Lord Jesus Himself recognizes the claim, that they are the special messengers of God and bring to man the expression of His will. It may not be easy for us to explain the precise nature of their inspiration. All we need to know is its practical extent and value, and that it was a divine influence which so possessed them that it preserved them from all error and enabled them to give to men a correct and infallible record of the facts they intended to represent, and the message which God intended they should bear. It was such a superintendence by the Holy Ghost as made their message absolutely inerrant and infallible. It was not always necessary that they should receive a revelation of all the facts in the case, because they may already have been familiar with many of them or even all of them. What they needed was such a divine guidance and control as would enable them to state these facts accurately and as fully as God required.

This divine control did not make them necessarily passive and mechanical. They were not writing as a phonograph would speak, or as a typewriter would obey the touch of the performer. While in many instances they may have been unconscious, in others they undoubtedly wrote and spoke in the free possession of all their faculties and in the exercise of their own intelligence. We know that they acted with perfect individuality, and that each man's message was colored by the complexion

of his own mind, so that we know the writings of Isaiah from those of Jeremiah; we know the voice of Elijah from that of Elisha; we know the style of John from that of Paul. The Book of God is like a beautiful garden, where all the flowers grow upon the same soil and are watered from the same heaven, but each has its own unique colors, forms, fragrance and individuality. This is a harp of nearly a hundred strings; but all are in perfect harmony, and every measure is resolved into one glorious refrain, JESUS, REDEMPTION, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, goodwill to men." It is not necessary for us to believe that the Holy Ghost inspired the wicked words which the Bible records, the ungodly speeches and the foolish utterances contained in the Book of Job, and many such things. All that was necessary was that it should give a correct record of what Job's wife and Job's friends really said, and even of the devil's wicked speeches. The speeches were inspired by the devil, but the record of them was inspired by the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle Paul records the nature and fullness of inspiration very explicitly when he says, in I. Cor. 2: 12, 13, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." We, therefore, know that these records are divine, that these messages are from the throne, and that this blessed book is the very Word of the living and everlasting God.

II.

The Lord Jesus Christ bears witness to the inspiration of the Scriptures. Again and again He quotes from the Old Testament books, and He tells us that it was

the Word of the Lord and the Word of the Spirit through the prophet.

The New Testament bears witness to the Old, and the Holy Spirit, through His later messengers, confirms His messages through former oracles.

The message brings its own evidence, and bears to every true heart the conviction of its divinity and its truth.

The best evidence of the Holy Scriptures is the response which they find in the consciences of men. Listening to the great Teacher, we are compelled to say, "He told me all that ever I did." "Is not this the Christ?"

To the child of God the divinest testimony to the Holy Scriptures is the blessing which they have brought to his own soul, the witness of the Holy Ghost within him, and the effect that this book has produced upon his heart and life.

Its miracles of grace are its divinest credentials. It has changed the sin-possessed soul into a saint of God, and has made the wilderness of evil and misery to blossom as the rose.

But it has also divine and supernatural credentials. Side by side with God's inspired Word have always marched the twin witnesses of miracles and prophecy. These mighty words have moved the heavens and shaken the earth. In response to their command the dead have been raised, the living have been transformed, and all the powers of nature have witnessed to the supreme authority of God's inspired commands.

This book is the panorama of the ages, and history has kept time to all its paragraphs. Here we find, centuries in advance, God's inspired prophecies of coming events, which have all been fulfilled so literally as to read more like history than prophecy. When Babylon was in its glory, Daniel dared to say that it would fall and be superseded by the Persian Empire. He lived to see the prophecy fulfilled.

When Cyrus was flushed with universal conquest, again Daniel looked through the horoscope of prophecy and saw the coming of Grecian and Roman conquerors. Again all the events of later times and history have literally fulfilled the visions of Daniel, and are fulfilling them today.

What but a divine mind could have given these predictions? What but an inspired book could contain such records?

Even in the minutest particulars we see the traces of divine wisdom and omniscience. The ancient prophet declared in one place that Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, should be carried to Babylon, and in another place he declared that Zedekiah should never see Babylon. It looked like a discrepancy at first, but history literally fulfilled it. Zedekiah, blinded by Nebuchadnezzar before he reached the city, entered it a captive, but never saw it with his sightless eyes. Thus has God been confirming His Word as the ages have come and gone.

One of the greatest mosques of the Mohammedan world has recently been destroyed by fire in the city of Damascus. It was an ancient Christian temple, on whose facade was cut in stone this inscription, "Thy kingdom, O Christ is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy word endureth to all generations." When the Moslems captured Damascus, and took possession of the old Christian church, they obliterated the inscription on the front by plastering it over and emblazoning in gold a verse from the Koran above it.

As ages went by, that archway spake only the message of the false prophet. But by-and-by time wore off the plaster, so that within the past two years the old Christian inscription has come out again, and God's word stands forth through all the wreck of time. When a few weeks ago the old church was burned down, strangely enough, the tower was left standing with the inscription untouched by the destroying elements; and there it

stands today, declaring to the world, "Thy word, O Christ, endureth to all generations."

III.

We have our responsibility for God's Holy Word. If this is the inspired Word of God, how solemn and supreme its claims! Let us believe it implicitly; let us believe it without compromise or questioning.

Let us not try to eliminate the supernatural and bring it down to the plane of our own reason and knowledge; but let us bow submissively before the throne of Him who speaks from heaven, and say with every fibre of our being, "It means just what it says."

But let us also obey. Believe means to "live by." Our faith has two sides; one is faith, the other is faithfulness. One is trust, the other is trustworthiness. They are the two wings that bear us above the dark abyss; they are the two oars that carry us through the dangerous rapids; they are the two hands that grasp and hold fast forever the eternal covenant.

Obedience is always the condition of faith. Only as we live by this blessed book can we fully claim its promises and rest upon its words of grace.

Let us live up to the fullness of our Bible. Let us translate every word of it into our lives. Let each of us be a new edition and a new version of the Scriptures, translated into flesh and blood, words and acts, holiness and service.

God has spoken to the successive generations, expecting each age to correspond to the message given; but to our generation He has given the largest measure of His truth and the fullness of His revelation. He expects from us a deeper, fuller, larger life. Let us live out the whole Bible in this dispensation.

There is a day coming when we shall have larger revelations of truth and an eternity in which to live them out: but in this life let us measure up to the

Word of God without abatement, and, like the Master Himself, fulfill every word of Scripture before we shall have run our course.

Have we lived out all the Bible? Have we proved its every promise? Have we illustrated its every command? Have we translated it into the living characters of our own record? God help us, not only to have a Bible, but each of us to be a Bible.

Finally, if this is God's inspired Word, it can be understood only by inspired men. There are two senses in which inspiration can be received and understood. The inspiration of the apostles and the prophets was to write the Bible, but we need an inspiration just as real to read it and to understand it. It was not written for the cold intelligence of natural man, but for the spiritual eyes of the heart. And so no man knoweth the things of God, save the Spirit of God which is in him. We must have "the mind of Christ" and the Holy Ghost before we can rightly and fully understand the Holy Scriptures.

Shall we receive His blessed Spirit to understand His blessed Word? Shall we read the Bible, not as a book of history and biography, but as the love letter of a Friend, the personal message of our Bridegroom and our Lord? Then shall we understand it, love it, and know its blessed meaning and heavenly power.

A poor blind girl was dying. Her cold fingers had ceased to feel. She called for her dear old Bible, and tried to read the raised letters once more, but all sense having gone from her hands, she turned away with sorrow, and clasping it to her bosom, and pressing it to her lips, she said, "My dear Bible, I cannot read you longer, but I love you still." At that very moment she found that as her lips touched the characters they could still feel and read them. She gave a great cry of joy, and as she passed her lips from line to line the words still spake to her intelligence and to her heart.

Beloved, let us take the Bible a little closer, and we shall understand it better, and it will speak from the heart of God to our inmost heart as the living message of His love.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF JOEL.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.''—Joel 2: 28.

JOEL was the oldest of the prophets of Judah whose writings have come down to us. His little book contains the substance and the text of the deeper and larger unfoldings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the later prophets, and is the keynote of the Day of Pentecost and the Christian Dispensation.

It is the text of all the volumes that have been written about the Holy Ghost, and the germ of all the manifestations of His power and grace throughout the ages that have followed this ancient message.

Just as God gave to Habakkuk, in one little verse, the text of the whole Gospel of salvation, so He gave to Joel the text of the whole doctrine of the Spirit. Like a rainbow upon the storm cloud, like a gleam of sunshine out of a dark sky, like a blossom amid the regions of eternal snow, so Joel's beautiful vision comes out of a dark calamity, a great national catastrophe.

It opens with the picture of an invasion of locusts, one of the most frightful scourges of the East. But beyond this little picture there is evidently some greater trial suggested, and some more formidable enemy foreshadowed. Perhaps the locust plague was but the type of the invading armies of the Chaldeans, and of the more dreadful judgments that are yet to come to Israel.

In the midst of this great national trial the prophet was sent to utter the trumpet call to the people to come together in fasting, penitence, humiliation, and prayer,

and to seek the interposition and deliverance of their covenant God. Nor did they call upon Him in vain. He sent the gracious answer; and, as He always does, He gave more than they asked, even the promise of His own personal coming to dwell among them, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the fullness of Pentecostal times, and the brighter promise of the glory which is to follow through the advent and reign of the Son of God Himself.

The whole vision is a kind of ground plan of the Dispensations, and especially of the Christian Dispensation and the times of the Spirit. It is also a sort of outlined sketch of God's dealings with the Church still in the manifestation of His presence and the outpouring of His Spirit; and not only with the Church, but with every individual soul.

I.

THE MINISTRY OF REPENTANCE.

Before the promise of the Spirit could be fulfilled, there must come the dispensation of repentance, humiliation, and earnest prayer. There came, therefore, the call to national penitence. "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation." It was to be a general and deeply earnest movement, including all classes. "Gather the children and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, 'Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach.'"

Such a dispensation of repentance must precede at every season of spiritual blessing. Its great type is John the Baptist and his ministry of warning and reformation. Doubtless it is prefigured by the vision of the prophet, and it preceded the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. So, still, before any

church or people can receive the showers of heavenly blessing, they must humble themselves before God; turn from sin, worldliness, and disobedience; publicly recognize God as the Author of their blessing; and wait upon Him in definite acknowledgment of their dependence. Then there will come to them the same gracious answer which the Prophet Joel was sent to bear to God's ancient people: "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things. . . . Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain."

II.

THE COMING OF CHRIST.

Next, here came the personal presence of the Lord Himself. "Ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed." This personal manifestation of the Lord in the midst of Israel was fulfilled in its most emphatic manner by the coming of Jesus, and His incarnation and ministry on earth after the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist. So Jesus must come personally before we can receive the full baptism of the Holy Ghost. Jesus does come to the penitent heart, the surrendered heart, the humble heart, and makes it His abode. "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

Jesus is the giver of the Holy Ghost, "He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost;" and we must receive Christ before we can receive the Spirit. The sinner's first act is not to receive the Holy Ghost, but to receive Jesus, turning to penitence from all sin, and opening his heart to the Saviour. "As many as received him, to them gave

he power to become the sons of God." And then He gives the heart in which He dwells the same Spirit which dwelt in Him.

III.

THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered." This is the very promise the Apostle Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost as the explanation of that extraordinary manifestation of the presence of God.

1. First, we will notice that it is a personal coming of the Spirit. It is not, "I will pour out of my Spirit," but "I will pour out my Spirit." It is the Spirit Himself who comes.

The Third Person of the glorious Trinity removed His residence from heaven to earth, just as literally as the Second Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, removed His residence from heaven to earth when He became incarnate and dwelt for thirty-three and a half years in Galilee and Judea.

This world is now the home of the Holy Ghost, a real personal Being, with affections, intelligence, and will like our own. The very Spirit that dwelt in Jesus during His earthly ministry is now residing among us, and is willing to dwell within every consecrated heart.

2. The abundance of the outpouring is very strongly expressed. The Hebrew word "pour" means a very

large effusion, a boundless filling of the Spirit. God does not give some of the Spirit, but gives the Spirit in all His infinite fullness. There is no limit whatsoever. He giveth the Spirit "without measure" unto Jesus, and Jesus gives us all that He has of the Spirit's fullness.

We have not yet begun to realize the illimitable power and resources which God places at the call of His people's faith and obedience.

3. The extent of the outpouring is universal "upon all flesh." Hitherto the Spirit's manifestations had been confined to individuals and to a single nation. Now there was to be no distinction of race or nation. It was to be a universal blessing for Jews and Gentiles, and equally open to all the human race.

There is, perhaps, an intimation of the physical aspect of the blessing. The Holy Ghost makes our flesh His home and our body His temple.

4. There was to be no distinction of age. The promise was to "the young men and to the old men," to "the sons and daughters" as well as to the sire. Henceforth even experience, age, and natural advantages were not to count; but the Holy Ghost was to be the wisdom and power of all that trusted Him. He would use the youngest as well as the oldest, and "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" would "ordain strength" and "perfect praise."

As we reach nearer to the climax of the age, the fullness of the Spirit, and the coming of the Lord, we find God choosing the young as well as the old, and making them the special instruments of His power. Many of the saintliest lives of today are those of young men heroes and young women heroines of the mission field, the holy ones whose consecration is more marked because it is not expected so much from them, amid the attractions and allurements of their youth and their worldly surroundings. Oh, that the young might know that the blessed Holy Ghost is willing and able to possess them in all the

enthusiasm of their nature, in all the freshness of their love, in all the glow of their ambition, and not only to fill and satisfy their own hearts, but to use them as "burning and shining lights"!

The saintliest man that ever lived in Scotland was young McCheyne, whose spirit still lives in the present generation. The most influential lives that have ever adorned the mission field have been those of the young men and the young women who have given up their life as a sacrifice for Christ. Yes, and the very Leader whom we love to follow was Himself a young man, and never will be old. He will put His young heart, and His glorious Spirit, into the youngest as well as the oldest, and will accept the bright and beautiful offering of a consecrated youth, and give to it the glory that the world can never bestow. Let us receive Him, and give Him our brightest and best.

5. All social classes and conditions without distinction had the promise. "The servants and the handmaids," mentioned in the next verse, literally mean the slaves, for the servants in ancient families were bond-slaves, and the absolute property of their masters. Upon this class the especial gifts of the Holy Ghost were to descend under the Christian Dispensation.

There is no record of a slave's having been called specially into service and divine enduement in the Old Dispensation; but under the New, the poorest, the lowliest, and most unlikely classes were to be elevated and to receive the enduement of power from on high, and the honor of special service in the kingdom of God. So we find in the New Testament, Onesimus, the slave, recognized as the friend of Paul, and commended to the affection of Philemon, his former master. In his epistles the Apostle Paul enjoins the servants to accept their position as service for Jesus, and promises them an equal recompense in the kingdom of the Lord, when all social positions may

be reversed and they may win the crown of highest service in the millennial age.

Indeed, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the servants and handmaids is specially emphasized in this verse. The two little words, "and also," are meant to designate this class as the particular objects of the divine care and blessing. Surely it has been true that the outcast classes of society have been raised up under the Gospel to be the vessels of God's richest mercy, and many of them the instruments of His noblest work.

No man is so low nor so pressed down by natural hindrances as to prevent his taking the highest place in the kingdom of Christ. Let the young, let the lowly, let even the illiterate know that the Holy Ghost is willing to choose them as the vessels of His grace, and is able to train them for the highest spiritual culture and the most honored service for that blessed Master, with whom is no respect of persons.

6. Special gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit were to be bestowed. "Your sons and your daugthers shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." These various expressions have reference to the peculiar gifts of the Spirit in the revelation of His will to man, and the high service for which He fits us.

Prophesying is speaking the divine message in the power of the Spirit. Dreams and visions refer to the special illuminations which He is pleased to give to His consecrated servants.

Of course, it includes the peculiar ministry of inspiration of which we have formerly spoken, and which is not continued in the Church. But there is a sense in which God still opens the inner ear to hear His voice, and illuminates the "eyes of the heart" to behold the visions of His glory and His Word.

It would seem as if to the aged it came in dreams and to the young in visions. To the old, the faculties of

nature being somewhat suspended, the voice of God has to be more direct. In the young the spiritual and mental powers are still in vigorous activity, and they are illuminated and quickened to catch the heavenly vision.

We do not encourage such an interpretation of these words as would give liberty for the extravagant and dangerous spiritualistic manifestations of the trance and medium, the pretended revelation, and other illusions and vagaries of our times. But after we have made necessary provision for holy caution, and the sober regulation of all spiritual manifestations, there is ample room for the quickening of the spiritual mind, the illuminating of the spiritual eye, and the unfolding of the mind of the Spirit to the humble, holy, and listening ear. God does give His visions still, especially to the young. He gave them to Joseph, He gave them to Timothy. He gave them to Paul. He gave them in the hour of consecration, in the season of waiting upon God, in the retirement of the closet, in the time when the nearest heart looks out upon a world of sin, and upon the vision of prohecy and inspired truth. God does make real to us His purpose for our lives, His purpose for the world, and the great prophetic plan which He is pleased to unfold through the Holy Ghost to the humble heart. He will "show us things to come." He will give to us inspirations, illuminations, aspirations, hopes, assurances, which become to our faith and hope like the little glimpse of sunlight which comes to the mariner on the pathless ocean, when for a moment the clouds divide, and a single observation can be taken of the sun in the blue heavens; and then the clouds return and the ship sails by that little glimpse of sunlight for the days to come.

God does give the holy heart its visions. Let us be sure they are the voices and the visions of God; then let us cherish them, let us live by them, let them lift up, and lead us on to all the heights of His love and

will. "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

7. The coming of the Holy Ghost will bring salvation to all who are willing to receive it. Not only does He endue the few with power for special service, but He opens the doors of mercy to all who are willing to believe and receive the Saviour.

In the day of His coming it shall come to pass that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." And so the Day of Pentecost is not only a day of blessing to the disciples, but a day of salvation to the multitude, and when He comes to us, "he will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."

How easy it is to lead souls to Christ when we are filled with the Holy Ghost! How the whole atmosphere is charged with heavenly power when God's waiting people are baptized with the fullness of His Spirit! Then the consciences of men are stricken sometimes without a single word, and hearts are led to seek the Saviour through an influence that they cannot understand.

Doubtless, as the days go by and the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, there shall be great revivals, times of wonderful awakening, seasons of special blessing, when multitudes shall seek the Lord, both at home and abroad, and there shall be great ingatherings from among the unsaved.

Our own generation has witnessed some examples of these great movements; and we may be encouraged to look for them still, as we go forth in the power of the Spirit, and give the Gospel in its fullness and simplicity to men.

8. This promise also includes the supernatural manifestation of divine power. "I will shew wonders in the heavens above, and signs in the earth beneath,"

The Holy Ghost came at Pentecost with supernatural power; and He still operates through the faith of His people in His healing and wonder-working might, as a testimony to His word and a witness to an unbelieving world that He is still the living and the present God.

These wonders also include the manifestations of His providence in answering prayer, in removing difficulties, in breaking down barriers, in providing means for the carrying on of His cause, and in all those wonders of providence and grace of which so many examples have been given in our own time.

The Holy Ghost, who dwells in the Church, is the omnipotent Executive of the Godhead, and is able to control the hearts of men, the elements of nature, and the events of providence, and to work together with His people, not only in the ordinary operations of His grace, but in the extraordinary manifestations of divine power which may best bear witness to His word and work.

We may trust Him for all the power we need for the carrying on of His work, and for the accomplishment of His will. If He dwells within us, He will work without us. If He is pregnant in our hearts, He will show His dominion in the whole empire of His Divine power, both in the things that are in heaven, and the things that are on earth, and the things that are under the earth.

9. Once more we see the coming of the Holy Ghost leading up to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The vision of the wonder-working Spirit leads right up to the events that preceded and ushered in the advent of Christ. The next chapter is the picture and prophecy of His coming. It is full of profound prophetic interest.

Among its pictures are the restoration of Israel from their long captivity, the final conflict of the ungodly nations with Christ and His people, the great battle

of Armageddon, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the establishment of His blessed kingdom.

Just as the coming of Jesus brought the Holy Ghost, so the coming of the Holy Ghost in the fullness of His power will bring the second coming of Jesus; and as that advent approaches, His power will be more gloriously manifested, and His people will better understand His great purpose and His infinite resources. Oh, let us understand His special business, which is to gather out of the nations a people for Christ, to finish the work of the Gospel, to sanctify and prepare the Bride for her coming Lord, then to present her to Jesus, and hand over to Him the government of the millennial world.

The Holy Ghost is longing for Christ's coming, and longing for a people that can understand Him and can co-operate with Him in bringing it about.

Just as the coming of the Holy Ghost in His fullness will bring the millennial Advent, so there is a sense in which His coming to each heart will bring a millennial blessing to that heart.

There is a millennium for the soul as well as for the Church. There is a kingdom of peace and righteousness and glory into which, in a limited sense, we can enter with Him here. There is a Kingdom of God which is within us, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Come, blessed Comforter, and usher it into every willing heart.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

"Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers."—Acts 28: 25.

THE name "Isaiah" means the "Salvation of Jehovah." Isaiah is the prophet of salvation, and the revealer of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, the divine agent in the work of salvation.

I.

ISAIAH'S CONSECRATION.

Isaiah's revelation of the Holy Ghost begins with his own call and consecration. We have the account of this remarkable experience in the sixth chapter of Isaiah. It began with a vision of the glory of God, which the Apostle John tells us, was the vision of Christ in His primeval glory.

The immediate effect of it was the revelation of his own sinfulness and unworthiness, and he threw himself upon his face, crying, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, . . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Every true baptism of the Holy Ghost must begin with the revelation of our sin, and this must come from the revelation of God's holiness and glory. As soon as we get undone, God is willing to begin to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Isaiah took the place of death, and then came the touch of life. A living coal from the heavenly altar was brought by one of the seraphim and laid upon his lips. What an angel's fingers could not endure the lips of mortals can receive. This was the baptism of fire,

and its effect was to cleanse his lips and purge away his iniquity, that he might be fitted for his great commission.

No man is fit to represent God and be the instrument of the Holy Ghost until he first receives the cleansing power of God. It is not the baptism of power we first receive, but the baptism of purity of fire that consumes and cleanses intrinsically and utterly.

Like the baptism of Pentecost, which was a tongue of fire, so it came to Isaiah's lips and so it must come to ours. The effect was consecration for service. Then he could hear the voice of God. Then he could see the great purpose of Jehovah, desiring to fill the earth with His glory. Then he could hear the heavenly cry, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And then he could answer unreservedly and unconditionally, "Here am I; send me."

God wants to send His workers, but He will send only volunteers. There must be perfect partnership. We must be willing to go, and then we must be sent.

But how was Isaiah sent? He was sent to do the hardest work. He was sent to a people that would not receive him. He was sent knowing that his message would be rejected. He was sent to a place of failure and persecution, and, at last, to a martyr's death. He was sent to know that his words would come back as echoes in his own lifetime, and that not until later generations would they be fully received and the glorious harvest gathered.

This knowledge, however, made no difference to Isaiah. Enough that God had sent him, and that he was carrying out the divine commission. Some would receive it; but it would be a tenth, a remnant, a little flock, who would hearken to his voice and become the seed, the holy seed, of a future harvest.

So God sends us, when we receive the baptism of fire. Often there is hard, uncongenial, unrequited service.

Let us go, like Isaiah, as the witnesses even of unpopular truth and a misunderstood ministry. So long as the Master is honored and pleased, what are men?

We are talking through the telephone of the ages. Some day the answer will come, and the Lord will say, "Well done!"

II.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Isaiah's next unfolding of the Holy Ghost is in connection with the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He gives us three pictures of the baptism of Jesus with the Spirit.

The first is in the eleventh chapter, from the second to the fourth verse: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

Here we have three sets of qualities which the Holy Ghost was to bring Christ. First are His intellectual enduements, "The spirit of wisdom and understanding."

Wisdom is the power to apply knowledge, understanding knowledge. Both are necessary to real practical wisdom. One may know much, and yet not know how to use it to advantage.

The Holy Ghost gives not only knowledge, but practical wisdom. So He rested upon the Lord Jesus, as He will rest upon those in whom Jesus still abides, un-

folding the will of God, the mind of Christ, the meaning of the Scriptures, their particular messages to us, and the lessons of our lives and our times.

In the second class of qualities bestowed on Christ is executive power, the spirit of counsel and might. Counsel is the power to plan rightly, and might the power to execute our plan.

Without a good plan the most earnest work is often a failure, and without executive ability the best plans often come to nought. In human affairs, these are usually divided; one has the conceiving mind, and another the executive right arm. But the Holy Ghost is both, and He gave both to the Lord Jesus Christ, making Him the Wonderful Counsellor, and, at the same time, the Mighty God, whose counsel shall stand and who will do all His pleasure.

The third class of attributes represents the moral and spiritual: "The spirit of understanding, and the fear of the Lord." And this is still further amplified by the words, "He shall make him of quick understanding (or quick smell) in the fear of the Lord." These are highest attributes of character. These the Lord Jesus possessed in an infinite measure.

The Scotch have a phrase which is very expressive. They talk of "sensing" things. To sense a thing is not to reason it out or know it by information, but it is to know it by instinct and intuition. It is somewhat like the sense of smell, or the instinct of the bird that knows the poison berry by the flash of intuition, while the scientist must analyze it and detect the poison by a chemical search.

Jesus had this intuition of right and wrong, this instinctive intuition of His Father's mind and will, this holy fear of evil, and this holy intuition of good; and this the sanctified soul has in proportion as it knows the Lord Jesus and is filled with the Holy Ghost.

It may seem strange to talk about Jesus, the Son of God, having the fear of His Father. But the more intimate we are with the truest lives, the more respect and veneration we have for them. Love is not opposed to fear in this high, sweet sense, for the more we love and trust a friend, the more we will dread to displease him, fear to offend him, and sensitively seek to please him.

This is the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, which the Holy Spirit is willing to give to every true and sanctified heart. Beloved, let us receive this indwelling Christ and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which He brings in wisdom, executive power, and the quick sense of right and wrong.

The second picture of the baptism of Jesus with the Spirit is in the first four verses of the forty-second chapter of Isaiah: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."

Here we have a beautiful blending of gentleness and power in the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."

Every truly great character is simple and gentle. Jesus is the perfect combination of the lion and the lamb, of the dove and the eagle; and He will so fill us that

we shall be crowned with the glory of meekness and the strength of love.

There is a third picture of the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ with the Holy Ghost. It is found in the first four verses of the sixty-first chapter: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations."

This well known passage was directly applied to Himself by the Lord Jesus Christ in His public address at Nazareth. Here we see the Holy Spirit anointing the Lord Jesus; first, for the ministry of the Gospel of salvation to the poor; secondly, with the ministry of healing; thirdly, the ministry of deliverance for the captives of sin; fourthly, the ministry of teaching, the recovery of sight to the blind; fifthly, with the message of His coming, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; and, finally, the message of comfort and consolation to all that mourn.

This was Christ's ministry, and He fulfilled it in the power of the Holy Ghost. He did not presume to preach the Gospel until He had received this enduement; neither should we. And, as we receive the same Spirit, ours will be a ministry of salvation, a ministry of healing, a ministry of sanctification, a min-

istry of teaching, a ministry of hope, a ministry of consolation, joy and gladness.

There is a very striking order in these three passages respecting Christ's baptism. First, it is promised in the second chapter, by the prophet. Next, it is proclaimed in the forty-second chapter by the Father to the Son. Here, it is confessed by the Saviour, and claimed by Himself, as He goes forth to exercise the ministry and claim the power.

Only thus can we receive the baptism of the Spirit. It is promised to us as well as to Him, and there must come a moment when it is really given by the Word of God and our act of consecration. Then there must come a third step when we ourselves confess it, accept it, and step forward to realize it in the actual exercise of the gift we have claimed, by proving our faith in our obedience. As we, like Jesus, go forth with the Gospel of salvation in dependence on the power of the Spirit, we, too, shall find, like Him, that we are endued with power from on high.

III.

THE HOLY SPIRIT ON ISRAEL AS A NATION.

We have a beautiful picture of this outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel in Isaiah 27:15-18: "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

This follows a long season of national depression and sorrow. It brings a complete and blessed revolution, turning the nation to righteousness and God, and chang-

ing every sorrow into prosperity, blessing, and peace. The first droppings of this blessed rain are already beginning to come, and the remant of Israel is turning to God, as well as many to their ancient fatherland.

The Holy Ghost is beginning to visit the seed of Abraham, and soon the wilderness of Palestine shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Let us pray for Israel, and its restoration will be to the Gentiles and to the world as life from the dead.

There is another picture of the same national blessing in Isaiah 59: 19-21. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, quoted from this passage with direct reference to the coming of Christ and the return of Israel. This is to be accompanied by a wide effusion of the Spirit from on high, which is to be a permanent and everlasting presence.

The Holy Ghost is not going to leave this world when Jesus comes back, but, as of old He dwelt in Christ in the days of His suffering and humiliation, so He shall dwell in Him again as He comes to reign in glory.

All that we know of His comfort, joy, love quickening life, and effectual power, is but the merest foretaste of the glory with which He will fill us in those coming ages. Then we shall know not only the fullness of Jesus, but we shall receive the residue of the Spirit, and it shall be true of Israel and of the Church of Christ, "My Spirit that is upon thee, . . . shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever."

IV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR EACH OF US AS INDIVIDUALS.

There is another and a greater promise of the Holy Ghost in Isaiah which each of us may claim for ourselves. It is found in the forty-fourth chapter, verses three to five. "For I will pour water upon him that

is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." The only limitation of this promise is our fitness and capacity to receive it. We have here a beautiful picture of the field, the flood, and the fruit.

First, the field is "the thirsty and the dry ground." In nature as well as in grace there must be a preparation of the soil for the seed and the harvest. The same seed on one field comes to nothing, and on another it produces one hundredfold; so the Holy Ghost is affected by the personal qualities of the heart in which He dwells, and the capacity of the soul for spiritual life, power and blessing. Some seem to be vessels prepared unto glory, and others only for sin and evil.

Two men sit down at the same table. To one it is a feast, to another it is a famine, simply because the one is hungry and the other satisfied. The very best dish on our dinner table is a good appetite. So God's spiritual preparation for the coming of His Spirit is a deep hunger and thirst. Let us thank Him as He gives it to us, and show more need than fullness, more want than blessing; for "blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Our best preparation for the Holy Spirit is emptiness, a sense of need, and a real spiritual capacity. Sometimes God has to bring this about by our very failures, and a revelation to us as to our nothingness and worthlessness.

Next, we find that on such a soil He will pour out "floods." It is not merely a few drops of rain, but the abundant rain, the ample, boundless overflow of His

Holy Spirit. Oh, that we might prove the richer fullness of this promise, and let Him pour out a blessing until there should not be room to receive it!

Finally, there is a threefold fruition. First, there is the salvation of individuals. "One shall say, I am the Lord's." Next, there must be the public confession of those who are saved. "Another shall call himself by the name of Jacob." And, thirdly, there is the deeper consecration of God's people. "Another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and call himself by the name of Israel." This describes a higher spiritual life.

This is a covenant voluntarily signed between the soul and the Lord, in which there is a perfect and entire surrender, and a complete claim of all His blessing and fullness.

Then comes the new surname, which, as with the patriarch Jacob of old, marked a crisis in his history, and a new departure of power and blessing. Israel means "a Prince with God," the conquering soul, the life that has entered into the divine fullness.

This is the work of the Holy Ghost, to lead us on to all these things; first, to accept the Lord, then to unite with His people and to acknowledge Him publicly, and then to go on into all the fullness of His grace and blessing.

As we receive the Holy Ghost, we must go on, and only as we go on, can we continue to receive His increasing and satisfying fullness. Beloved, have we taken all the steps? Have we signed the personal covenant? Have we special relations with God? Is He to us what He is to no one else? Have we received the eternal surname, and are we written in heaven in characters which no one knoweth, save Him that gave the name and the soul on whom He has inscribed it?

Such, then, is Isaiah's vision of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit that came first upon him and enabled him to re-

veal it to others in his yet more glorious ministry, in the person of the Lord Jesus, in the future glory of the Jewish nation, and in the soul that receives His fullness.

All this has come to pass in the ages since Isaiah's time. We are living in the noontide light and glory of the Holy Ghost. Have these ancient promises and prophesies been fulfilled to us? Has the vision been translated into our life? Have we proved this part of God's holy Scriptures?

Let us come to Him as did Isaiah, in deep spiritual hunger, self-renunciation, and consecration. Let us receive the living seal which the hand of Jesus is ready to put upon our lips and leave upon the altar of our hearts; then let us go forth like Isaiah, in the power of the Spirit to proclaim His grace and fullness, and to become spiritual conductors, passing the blessing on to the souls that are hungering and perishing around us; let our lives, like Isaiah's signify "the Salvation of Jehovah."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN LIFE AND TESTIMONY OF JEREMIAH.

JEREMIAH, although occupying in comparison with Isaiah the second place in our Old Testament canons, really occupied the highest place in the mind of his people, and in the estimation of the rabbis and religious leaders of the Jews. So supremely was he regarded as the guardian spirit of Judah and Jerusalem that they expected him to come back from the dead and to usher in some new bright era of national hope and prosperity. Therefore, when Jesus of Nazareth was performing His wondrous miracles upon earth, and was attracting the attention of all the people, we find that many of them supposed that He was no other than Jeremiah who had risen from the dead.

The life of Jeremiah is inseparably linked with the last days of ancient Judaism and the fall of Jerusalem. The period of his ministry, occupying as it did about forty years, was singularly parallel to the forty years of the ministry of Moses in the beginning of Israel's history. It was parallel, also, to the forty years of trial and probation which preceded the fall of Jerusalem in later centuries, after the testimony of Christ and His apostles had been at length rejected.

These three periods of forty years were all times of probation, and, alas! of provocation, on the part of Israel. Just as Moses was the divine messenger under the first, so Jeremiah stood under the second with loving loyalty to his country and supreme fidelity to His God. He strove to avert the awful catastrophe which he saw so swiftly and surely coming upon his people. When at last he

could not prevent it, he shared it with his people; and finally, it seems probable, perished at their cruel hands.

The story of his life and the record of his testimony are full of the most touching and beautiful manifestations of the divine character and love and of the working of the Holy Ghost.

The New Testament has borne most distinct witness to his inspired messages, and recognized his words as the messages of the Holy Ghost. We shall glance first, at his personal call; next, at the relation of his life and ministry to his own people and times; and, finally, at his messages for later ages and for us through the Spirit.

I.

JEREMIAH'S CALL AND COMMISSION.

Jeremiah has given an account of his call and commission in the first chapter of his prophetic book. It is not unlike the story of Isaiah's consecration in the sixth chapter of his prophecy. God came to him and announced to him before his birth he had been called to be a prophet unto the nations.

His commission is a very glorious one. "I have this day set thee," He says, "over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, . . . and to plant." Not only did his commission extend to his own people, but at his prophetic word the mightiest nations of his time rose and fell. The mighty armies that traversed the whole earth and made the nations to tremble, moved at the word of Jeremiah through the Holy Ghost. Alone in his quiet home at Anathoth, or suffering in his lone dungeon in Jerusalem, he was really the mightiest force of his time. It was his prophetic word that decided the fate of dynasties and kingdoms.

There is nothing more sublime than the simple power which the Holy Ghost gives to the humblest saint; and the ministry of prayer which He enables the lowliest

child of God to exercise. Is there a spectacle more glorious than the picture given us nearly a century later of that mighty sovereign of the east, the all victorious Cyrus, after he had subdued the nations, after proud Babylon had fallen beneath his feet, after the whole world had become his empire, compelled by an influence that he could not understand, to fulfill the very words of Jeremiah's prophecy?

His was a peculiar prophetic ministry, no doubt; but God will give a similar power to every true saint who is willing in the name of Lord Jesus to accept the high commission and the holy ministry of prayer, and to grasp the sceptre of faith through which He can touch the world with the power and blessing of the eternal God.

The commission of Jeremiah was a very remarkable one. Naturally he seemed wholly unfitted for it. Everything is his nature recoiled from the task to which he was called. He was sensitive, shrinking and loving. It was a fearful sacrifice of all his feelings to be compelled to stand in constant antagonism and to utter God's rebukes against the people that he loved, against princes, priests, and prophets.

Far sweeter would it have been for him to weep for Israel's sorrows and even to suffer for her sins; but God called that gentle nature to be the messenger of His most fearful warnings and judgments, and to pass through an ordeal of suffering from which the bravest heart might shrink. He did shrink. "I am a child," he said, but God would not allow him to plead his weakness. It was not Jeremiah's strength that was to prevail, but God's mighty enduement of power from on high. So the hand of God stretched out and touched his lips. The power of God was communicated to his shrinking weakness, and he was commanded to stand forth without a doubt or a fear, and to speak the words that God should inspire, and to be like a wall of adamant

and a fortress of fire against the priests, the princes, the prophets, and the people of the land.

In like manner God often calls us to ministries for which we are naturally unfitted; but if He calls and enables, what need have we to fear? Indeed, the only thing we have cause to fear is the spirit of fear; and when we step forth at the divine command to fulfill such sacred trusts, we must stand in fearless courage and absolute obedience. Yes, we might almost say, audacity is the only safe position. "Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them" is still as true for us as it was for Jeremiah of old.

II.

JEREMIAH'S RELATION TO HIS OWN PEOPLE AND TIMES.

Jeremiah lived and testified through the reign of four of Judah's kings. He was called to his ministry early in the reign of young Josiah, who, having inherited a corrupt throne, found himself, while yet but a child, the sovereign of a people who had been stereotyped in idolatry and sin. The long reign of Manassah, which covered half a century, was paralleled only by the days of Ahab and Jezebel; and, although the last days of his life led him, through divine judgment, to sincere repentance, yet they were too short to undo the fearful crimes of a long reign. After the short reign of a son as wicked as himself, Josiah ascended the throne.

He was destined to be one of the best of Judah's kings, and to take his place beside Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah among the true successors of David. Beginning early to struggle against evil, he labored courageously and consistently till the close of his reign for the reformation of his kingdom. In these efforts he was seconded by the faithful Jeremiah. Indeed, there is no doubt that the reformation was due, under God, chiefly to the labors of Jeremiah himself.

Day by day he stood in the streets of Jerusalem, uttering his tender and solemn messages. His earlier addresses have been preserved to us in the beginning of his prophecy. Reminding the people of God's ancient covenant and their former faithfulness and blessing, he appealed with tender solemn pathos to their hearts. "Thus saith the Lord," he would cry, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thy espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness." And that he would renew the appeal, and cry, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?" "My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Then as he saw, perhaps, their cold indifference or scornful unbelief, there would follow some solemn message, the vision of coming calamity, the dramatic picture of the invader and the besieging army from the north and the impending fall of Jerusalem. Or sometimes his heart would break out in a wail of despair and anguish, "Oh, that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Thus he preached and pleaded and warned and waited, year after year. Gradually some improvement appeared, until after a while it seemed as though the clouds were passing, and the nation were returning to their God.

At this time a strange and important incident occurred. It was the finding of a lost copy of the law amid the rubbish of the temple. The house of God had become like a filthy stable, and had been given up to the rites of idolatry for generations. But, as they were cleansing it at the commandment of Josiah, they

found amid the wreck and debris an old copy of the law of Moses. Perhaps it was the book of Deuteronomy; perhaps it was a larger scroll containing the entire law. It made the deepest impression upon the prophet and the king.

It was like the finding of Luther's Bible in the sixteenth century. It was solemnly brought to the king, and then the priests and the people were gathered together in public convocation and the sacred book was read. As thy listened to the voice of God, and learned His precepts and commandments, which for ages they had neglected and disobeyed, there began to fall upon them something like the spirit of a true humiliation and reformation.

Following up the movement, Josiah summoned the whole nation to Jerusalem, and sent out a universal call for a great Passover. They came from north and south and east and west; and some even of the remnant of Israel gathered with them; and there they kept the Passover as it had not been kept for generations.

One would have thought that all this must have filled the heart of Jeremiah with joy and confidence. Doubtless he did appreciate fully even the transient awakening. But it brought to him one of those crises which are most trying to a faithful minister. He saw the shallowness of the movement. He saw the deep insincerity on the part of the leaders. He saw that the heart of the people was wedded to idolatry and sin, and that all this was but superficial and would soon pass away. They were willing to go so far; but a radical revival that would separate them from all idolatry and sin, and from the gross vices and unrighteousness which pervaded the whole national life, for this they were unwilling. He saw with the vision of divine discernment that nothing short of this revival would avert the impending stroke.

So he pleaded more solemnly that ever. He summoned the princes, the priests, the prophets, and the people to righteousness and holiness; to circumcise their

hearts and not merely rest in a ceremonial worship or an outward reformation.

But his messages found little response. The transient reformation passed by; the hearts of the people were still unsanctified; the prophet was sure that the day of judgment for Judah was only delayed but not averted.

It was not long before clouds began to gather more dark and hopeless than before. In an evil hour Josiah was led into a foolish and hasty campaign against the king of Egypt. Neglecting the warning which God sent to him through the lips of that heathen king, he rashly ventured into the forbidden conflict, and left his life upon the bloody field of Megiddo.

With Josiah's death the last hope of Judah died, and Jeremiah utter over him a lamentation which was the very cry of despair. Then began that chain of crimes and calamites which culminated in the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah.

Jehoiakim, the immediate successor of Josiah, was a counterpart of Ahab and Jeroboam in the worst days of Israel. He set at naught all the counsels and warnings of the prophet. When, at last, Jeremiah had Barak to read to him from his prophetic scroll the solemn judgment which God had pronounced against him, instead of the least show of repentance, he took his penknife, cut the objectionable words out of the scroll, and threw them into the fire.

The prophet returned to his house, rewrote the threatenings of Jehovah with many terrible additions, and sent them back to the king. Again and again was Jehoiakim warned of his impending ruin; but his heart seemed given up to an utter infatuation of willfulness and wickedness, until, at last, after an infamous reign of eleven years, he was slain in a night attack by the Babylonian army upon Jerusalem, and his lifeless body was exposed in the open fields. Men said in after ages that on the withered forehead could be read in awful

characters the name of the evil spirit whom he had followed all his life.

Jeremiah had predicted long before that the wicked king should be, "buried with the burial of an ass," and his wretched life ended in shame and ruin. His reputation was so desperate that he was not even buried in the sepulchres of the kings.

He was followed by Jehoiachin, who was really the puppet and creature of the Babylonian monarch. After a short and uneventful reign, he in turn was succeeded by Zedekiah, the last of Judah's kings.

Zedekiah was weak and irresolute rather than obstinately wicked. His whole reign was marked by vacillation and cowardice. He had a certain measure of respect for the messages of Jeremiah, sometimes sending for him, and seeming to listen to his counsels and to desire to carry them out; but he feared the princes and the people, and had not the courage to obey his own convictions.

Again and again did Jeremiah assure him that, if he would but obey the voice of God, even yet he and his kingdom would be spared; but as surely as he persisted in the counsels of the people and the princes, and depended upon the alliances of the neighboring nations, both he and his kingdom should perish.

Many were the vicissitudes and trials of the faithful prophet during these last years. Again and again was he exposed to the charge of disloyalty and treated as an enemy of his country. Again and again did the false prophets testify against him and try to bolster up the hopes of the people by deceiving visions of coming prosperity. Sometimes he was pursued for his life. Often he was exposed to imprisonment and the severest hardships, and left even for days to sink in the mire of his dungeon, and was saved from death only by the interposition of compassionate strangers.

And so the years rolled by, until at last the cup of iniquity was full and the divine judgment could wait no longer. The Babylonians invaded the land. The cordon of destruction tightened around Jerusalem, and, at last, the walls were broken up and the Chaldeans entered. Zedekiah sought for safety in cowardly flight, and succeeded in reaching the plains of Jericho with a small retinue; but he was pursued by the Babylonians and captured. He and his sons were taken into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar. His sons were murdered before his eyes; and, as if to stereotype this last and hideous vision forever on his memory, his eyes were then cruelly put out, and he was taken in blindness and bondage to Babylon, and left to end his days as a royal captive.

What was the fate of Jeremiah? He had been true to God, and God had not failed him in this dark and dreadful hour. The Babylonian king having heard of his high and heroic character, gave orders to his officers that Jeremiah should be carefully sought out and guarded from all harm. Not a hair of his head was touched, but he was treated with honor and every consideration. He was given his choice of going to Babylon, with liberty and ample provision for his every need, or of remaining among his own people. Of course, he chose the latter. He had lived for them, and he was ready to die with them; and so he remained among the remnant that were left after the deportation of most of the leading citizens of Jerusalem as captives to Babylon.

It is said that he went down with those who went to Egypt and dwelt among them, still counseling them and teaching them the messages of God; but they refused his warnings and counsels, and ultimately, tradition has reported, they even took the prophet's life. He became one of the glorious list of martyrs of truth who sealed their testimony with their blood.

Humanly speaking, his life was not a success; but

when the books shall be opened and the rewards shall be given, it will be found that Jeremiah's life outweighed the most successful and brilliant career. His was the high honor of remaining true to God and faithful to his trust, even in the fact of seeming failure and the martyr's death.

This is true success, and this was the glorious testimony of Jeremiah's life.

III.

HIS MESSAGE TO OUR TIMES.

Let us look finally at his message to us in later ages. His prophetic writings are full of messages for future times. The very failure of the kingdom of Judah was but a back-ground for the vision of the true kingdom which the future was to bring.

He saw, as no other had ever seen, how powerless was the highest teaching or the severest suffering to lead to virtue and faithfulness. Alas! the secret of failure was found in the wretched material of poor, fallen human nature and the need of a strength higher than human purpose, or even the light of truth and example. He looked forward with deep longing to the bright day of the New Testament, the coming Saviour, and the Holy Ghost.

As a result, Jeremiah has given to us out of the darkness and failure of his own time, the inspired vision of the new covenant, the Gospel, and the work of the Spirit. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews has repeatedly quoted from this ancient prophet the most comprehensive statement of the new covenant which has ever been given to the Church of God.

It is found in the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah, from the thirty-first verse to the thirty-fourth. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord;

"But this shall be the covenant that I shall make with the house of Israel; After these days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more."

The distinguishing feature of this new covenant which Jeremiah announced lies in the fact that God promises to write His law upon our hearts, and to "put it in our inward parts." The old covenant gave light and law, but it did not give the power and disposition to obey it. But the new covenant writes it in our inmost being; makes it part of our very nature; incorporates it into our will, our choice, our desires, our very intuitions, so that it becomes second nature to us, our spontaneous desire, and our deepest life.

This is the work of the Holy Ghost. This is the meaning of sanctification. This is the great purpose of Christ's redemption and His indwelling in the heart of the believer through the Spirit.

It is God who undertakes to keep this covenant. It is not dependent upon what we do; but He becomes our God first and makes us His people. He undertakes to teach us and to reveal to us by the Holy Spirit the meaning of His will, the nature of His covenant, and the purposes of His grace and love.

We are not dependent upon outward instruction mere-

ly; but each of us has access to Him, and may enjoy the personal teaching of the Holy Ghost.

It will be noticed that the forgiveness of sins is not the primary promise of this chapter. It is secondary, and follows as a matter of course; but the primary feature of the great promise is the power of divine grace to keep from sin, and to lead us into righteousness and holiness.

This is the glorious Gospel which Jesus has come to bring in its fullness, and of which the Holy Ghost is at once the Revealer and the Enabler. It brings not merely the message of repentance and forgiveness with the dreary prospect of continued sin. It comes not only to forgive the past, but to assure us of a power that will keep us for the future, and put into us a nature that is in its tendency holy and divine, and that leads us to choose the will of God and the life of holy obedience.

Beloved, have we learned this blessed message of the Holy Ghost through Jeremiah? Have we come into this new covenant? Have we proved the fullness of salvation through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and the law written upon our inmost hearts?

Another message which Jeremiah has left for later times is the lesson of faith which he has given in the thirty-second chapter of his prophecy. It was a very striking object lesson. In the days when the future was as dark as calamity could make it, when the whole land was in the possession of the Chaldeans, and the city was about to fall; at a time when real estate in Judah was practically worthless, Jeremiah was commanded to invest his means in his patrimonial estate in the village of Anathoth. It would seem like throwing money away; but instead of hesitating, he immediately obeyed the divine command, and, publicly, before all the people, completed the purchase, subscribed the papers, had the transaction duly attested and sealed, and put his little

fortune into the piece of property which he knew for two generations would be under the blight of the long captivity of Judah.

What did it all mean? It was a practical expression of his faith in the future of his country, and of the fact that a day was coming when that inheritance would be worth all its cost, when that estate would come back to his family again, and when his own glorious promise of Israel's restoration would be fulfilled.

It was stepping out in the dark hour and committing himself to the promise of God. It was counting upon the things that are not as though they were. It was the faith that anticipates the future, and in the midnight hour lifts up its song of praise, and puts its foot upon the seeming void "and finds the rock beneath."

This is the spirit of true faith in every age. We too, like Jeremiah, must count upon God's Word when there is nothing else to count upon, and must exercise that faith that is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." We must step out in the dark and empty void, and know that God is underneath us, and that the vision of faith and the promise of the future are as certain and real as His eternal throne.

There is yet another message for future times which Jeremiah has left us, and on which for a moment we linger, It is found in the eighteenth chapter of his prophecy. It is the figure of the potter and his vessel. The prophet, having gone down to the potter's house, saw him working a vessel upon a wheel; but, through some cause, the vessel was marred in the hand of the potter. Perhaps the clay did not yield to his touch, and would not lie plastic in his hands. He had to throw it aside, and it seemed as if his work had failed, and that even the material was rejected. Oh, how solemnly it speaks to us of our past failures! Perhaps God took us in hand, and began to work out in our life some

gracious purpose; but we shrank from the ordeal; we refused to submit to His will. We asked an easier way, we held back from the cross; and God seeming unable to accomplish His high and holy purpose, had to put us aside and let His gracious plan seem, for the time, to fail. Oh, how sad and solemn the wrecks that lie behind us through our willfulness, our unbelief, and our unwillingness to trust our Father's wisdom and love in the testing hour!

But there is a beautiful sequel to Jeremiah's parable. The clay was not thrown away; but the potter took it up again and fashioned it again, another vessel, "as it pleased the potter to make it." There was a time when I think I interpreted this vision wrongly, and thought it meant that God took up our broken lives and made the best of them that He could; but that it was not all that He had at first intended. I believe that the grace of God loves to triumph even over our self-will, and I cannot but think that even in the very terms of Jeremiah's object lesson, there are lines of hope and divine encouragement, and that we may dare to believe that the vessel which the potter made the second time was even a better vessel than he had tried to make before, because, we are told, "He made it again another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make it." This time it was not our pleasure but His that was accomplished. Perhaps he gave us grace to yield our stubborn will and to submit with confidence to his hand. Perhaps, in His wondrous and over-ruling mercy, He brought us to full surrender and subdued our willfulness. At least, His mighty love triumphed over all hindrances, His will was accomplished, and His high purpose was fulfilled. Yes, the grace of God is able, not only for Satan and for sin, but for self too, and strong enough to overcome the opposition of our weak and willful hearts.

Thank God for One whose sovereign grace saved us

when we were dead in sin, and whose all-sufficient power is able to save us to the uttermost, to bring us to the place, where, some day, we shall say, "Not unto us, O God, not unto us, but unto Thy name be all the glory."

"Grace all the work shall crown,
To everlasting days,
It lays in heaven that topmost stone
And well deserves the praise."

CHAPTER XX.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EZEKIEL.

"The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him."—Ezekiel 1: 3.

THE ministry of Ezekiel was dramatic and pathetic. Like Jeremiah's, it was connected with the fall of Judah, but it differed in this, that while Jeremiah was present amid the scenes of sorrow connected with that awful tragedy. Ezekiel was far removed and saw it in vision only, from the distant banks of the river Chebar. God showed it all to him, and day by day the painful panorama passed before his eyes and was reproduced to his countrymen around him in his inspired visions; so that, the very day the city fell, he knew it in his spirit, although the tidings did not reach him until years afterward.

Indeed, in his own personal life he became a sort of object lesson of the events which he described, and in which he was so deeply interested as a prophet and a patriot. In his own person he suffered in type and figure what his country and people were enduring. He went through the days of famine, eating unclean food, and setting forth in his own sufferings the horrors of the approaching calamities.

The day that Jerusalem fell, his own wife died, and he knew that she was made in God's mysterious providence an awful picture of the blow that had fallen upon Jerusalem. Thus he both lived and taught the lessons of his time, and left the wondrous record for the instruction of later ages.

The events that were transpiring around him formed

a fitting framework for the message of faith and hope which he was sent to unveil for the future. Through the wreck of Israel's national history, he was able to see, as through the broken walls of a ruined building, the light of the coming dispensation and the promise of a better hope.

His pages shine with the light of the Gospel, unfolding with a clearness, that even Isaiah does not surpass, the times of the Messiah, and especially the person and work of the blessed Holy Spirit. Nowhere are there more sublime heights of holy vision, and nowhere more clear, spiritual and practical unfoldings of truth respecting the spiritual life and the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Let us look at three remarkable visions of his prophecy.

THE VISION OF THE GLORY.

The prophecy opened with an extraordinary vision of peculiar sublimity and majesty, revealing the glory of the Lord in the mighty working of His Spirit and providence.

First, he saw a whirlwind coming from the north, the direction from which the enemies of Israel came, and where the great world empires had their seat.

In the midst of this whirlwind there was a fire enfolding itself; a sort of whirlwind fire, turning upon it own axis, and sweeping on in majesty and glory. The whirlwind and the fire have already been made familiar as the symbols of God and His manifested presence and glory.

Next, he beheld in the midst of the fiery whirlwind four living creatures. These were the cherubim. We have already seen them at the gate of Eden and in the Tabernacle and the Temple, and they reappear in the vision of the Apocalypse.

They are special symbols of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God's infinite attributes and mighty workings

through Him. The faces of the lion, the ox, the eagle, and the man represent the sovereignty, the power, the intelligence, and the love which guide all the government of God and the whole plan of redemption which He is working out through the Lord Jesus Christ.

These cherub forms were robed in fire, and they moved like the lightning and the living flame. As in the other representations of the cherubic figures, they had six wings, denoting the swiftness and celerity of their movements. To still heighten the figure, there were, next, four mighty wheels, so vast in the sweep of their circumference that, to the prophet's eye, they seemed terrible in their majesty. Their tires were full of eyes, all around their vast circumference.

These wheels kept time to the movement of the wings of the cherubim, and bore the cherubic forms wherever the Spirit directed: for "the Spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels."

This wonderful vision represented the majesty, the grandeur, the power, and the celerity of the operations of God's mighty Spirit and universal providence. It was the sublime figure of the omnipresence and infinite activity of the living God and the Holy Spirit, who, as the divine Executive, is ever carrying out His purposes and plans.

All this sublime imagery was but the foundation for something still grander. For the prophet next beheld, above the cherubim, the wings, and the wheels, a mighty firmament, shining in its transparent brightness like the terrible crystal; and on this firmament a glorious throne like a flaming jasper; on this throne, as the centre of the whole vision and the sublime climax of the whole picture, was "the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it."

This was the glorious mediatorial throne of the Lord Jesus Christ, and around about it was the rainbow of covenant promise, softening all the awful brightness,

and proclaiming to His people that He was their covenant King.

What a majestic vision of the glory of God, of the Son of Man, and of the Holy Spirit, through whom He works out His mighty plans, and whose swiftness, strength, omnipresence and omniscience are so majestically represented in the consuming fire, the gleaming lightning, the awful whirlwind, the cherub forms, the manifold wings, the living wheels full of eyes around their whole circumference, the crystal firmament, the sapphire throne, the Son of man; above it all, the rainbow of covenant promise, and the Holy Spirit working out all the purposes of God's infinite love and grace!

Such was the vision with which Ezekiel's ministry began. Such was the mighty One whose messenger he was called to be. Soon after, the personal call came, God commanded him to take the roll containing his message and eat it; and, as he did so, it became as honey in his mouth and in his bowels. Then the vision returned once more, and the glory again appeared before his sight, and God sent him forth to repeat the message, and to be a watchman unto His people, and to warn them from Him; and he went forth to his lifework, armed with the consciousness of that glorious presence, in view of which the power and the persecutions of his enemies were as naught.

To us, beloved, may not come the majestic vision which Ezekiel saw; but faith can clothe the gentle Presence that whispers to our hearts with all the majesty of those ancient garments. We can know that He who speaks to us so gently and works so patiently in our lives is the same majestic Presence that filled the heavens with His glory, whose mighty wheels of providence sweep with the celerity of the lightning around the vast circumference of the universe.

The vision has passed away, but the glory still remains. Though that glory is veiled today, yet it is none the

less real; and some day we shall behold it, too, as Ezekiel saw it of old by the river Chebar.

II.

THE DEPARTING VISION.

This glorious vision which Ezekiel saw was yet in the midst of Israel. It was the Presence which had led them through all their history. It was the same God who had marched before them and hovered above them in the pillar of cloud and flame, dividing the Red Sea and the Jordan, conquering the Canaanites, establishing the throne of David, exalting Solomon to all his glory, and manifesting Himself in the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, and in the wonders of divine love and power through all the centuries of Israel's history. Now, however, the incorrigible sins of the nation had worn out His patience and almost grieved Him away.

That glorious Presence was about to leave the temple that He had loved. Judah was ready to fall, desolate and forsaken, into the hands of her cruel foe.

There is nothing more tender and sublime than the vision of this departing glory. Like a mother bird, it seems to hover, unwilling to depart, lingering with fluttering wing above the cherubim and above the threshold of the house, and last upon the brow of Olivet, before it can bear to take its long, sad flight, and leave their house unto them desolate.

In the third verse of the ninth chapter, we see it beginning to depart, "The glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house." Again, in the fourth verse of the tenth chapter it would seem that He had gone back and once more poised His wings and attempted the same flight. "The glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was

full of the brightness of the Lord's glory. And the sound of the cherubim's wings was heard, as the voice of the Almighty God when He speaketh."

Then again, in the eighteenth verse of the tenth chapter we see His flight begun. "Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and sood over the cherubims, and the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight; when they went out, the wheels also were beside them; and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house."

But not yet did the vision take its final flight, for, in the twenty-second verse of the eleventh chapter, we see the glory lingering yet on Mount Olivet. "Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountian which is on the east side of the city."

Still God's patience waited and pleaded, and His judgment sought to awaken and change their stubborn hearts of sin; but all in vain. At length we hear the mournful conclusion, "Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. . . . Her priests have violated my law, and profaned mine holy things. . . . . Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, and to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy. . . . And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore, have I poured out

mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads."

It was like that later vision, when the same Son of man stood upon the same Olivet, looking down upon the city that had refused His warnings and miracle of love, and said: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: . . . ye shall not see me, until the time cometh when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

So the Spirit left them, and the next chapter begins the vision of judgment and destruction. Beloved, the same story has often been re-enacted. It was re-enacted when Jesus left the temple. The Roman legions followed, and Jerusalem fell again. It was re-enacted when the Church of the Holy Apostles became corrupt and sank to mediæval darkness because the Holy Spirit was grieved away.

The same calamity is threatening the Church again. The blessed Spirit is being grieved from her sanctuary and from her altars by compromises with worldliness and sin, and He is seeking a home in humble hearts and lowly missions and little companies of those who will obey Him and fully trust Him. It may be enacted in your life; for you, too, can vex the Holy Ghost and grieve Him away. The temple of your heart may be left desolate and forsaken, and your life become exposed to the judgments of God and the calamities of sorrow.

Many a sad life and many a sad death is but the story of Israel repeated once more. Oh, let us not grieve Him! Oh, let us not permit Him to pass away! Oh, let us cherish Him, honor Him, obey Him, make our heart His home, and Him our Holy Guest!

III.

THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT'S RETURN.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I also will save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God, In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen, that are left round about you, shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it" (Ezk. 36:25-36).

Of course this promise has a primary reference to Israel as a nation, and will yet be graciously fulfilled in their restoration from the captivity of ages and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the nation; but it has also a distinct reference to the New Testament times, and shines with the light of the Gospel of full and free salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are three very distinct stages in the promised blessing. The first includes forgiveness and conversion; that is the sprinkling of the clean water upon them, the forgiveness of their sins, and the taking away of the hard and stony heart, and the giving of the heart of flesh, the work of justification and regeneration.

There is no need to say more respecting these earlier verses. The teaching is as simple and clear as the third chapter of the Gospel of John or the epistles of St. Paul. But there is a second stage of blessing which is distinct and important. It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the incoming of His cleansing and sanctifying power in the heart of the believer.

"I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." This is something different from the new spirit and the new heart. It is God Himself coming to dwell in the new spirit by His Holy Spirit, and bringing a constraining and efficient power that causes the soul to walk in holiness and enables him to keep His commandments.

Could we put on canvas the picture it would be something like this; first, we would paint the natural heart black and sinful; then, second, in the centre of this black heart we would place a little white heart, denoting the regenerated spirit, the new heart that comes at conversion, but which is still in the midst of darkness and sin, and has to maintain a painful and often unequal struggle with the surrounding and encompassing evil.

In the third place, we would paint a ray of heavenly light, or a living coal of celestial fire, which we would put in the centre of this new heart; and from it the effulgent rays of life and light would reach out into all the darkness round about, filling the new heart and the old, until the darkness and sin are crowded out, and God Himself possesses the whole being, enabled it to think and feel, to trust and love, to obey and persevere, even as Christ Himself would walk.

This is the Spirit that sanctifies; this is the cleansing power that our poor weak heart needs. This is the efficient strength which the Holy Ghost wants to give to every heart that will surrender fully to His power and receive Him in His all-sufficiency. Beloved, have we done so? Have we received not only the new Spirit but the divine Spirit, and learned to know the mystery which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory"?

There is still another stage in the promised blessing to be found in the outworking of this indwelling Spirit and the influence of the sanctified and victorious life upon our circumstances and external life. "Ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers." We become established, and get settled in God's will and blessing. "I will call for the corn, and will increase it and lay no famine upon you." We become nourished, joyful, happy Christians, and every one beholds in us the satisfied and benignant rest and glory of a victorious life.

"I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field." Our work is blessed, our fruit is abundant, and our blessing extends even to "the heathen." This is contemporaneous with our spiritual blessing. "In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded." The barren wastes of life shall blossom as the rose. The things that have been sad and fruitless will become

blessed and beautiful. The years that have been lost will be restored, and all we do shall prosper.

Nay, He says, "The dosolate land shall be tilled, . . . and they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about" it shall know that God has done it.

Of course, this is yet to be fulfilled to Israel as a people. Already we begin to see the foretokening of that Millennial spring that is opening for the long down-trodden land and people. But it has a beautiful meaning to each individual Christian life. For God is "able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

The soul that receives the Holy Spirit in all His fullness will find the providence of God keeping pace with His inward blessing, and the grace that we have experienced in our heart will reflect itself in all our outward life. The King that reigns supreme upon the throne of the heart will sway His sceptre around the whole circle of our life, and bring into subjection everything that hurts or hinders us.

He will heal our bodies; He will answer our prayers; He will bless our homes; He will prosper our business; He will remove our difficulties; He will open our way; He will "cause the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose," and "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier, shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

The blessings of God's providence are inseparably connected with the indwelling of His Spirit and the experience of His sanctifying grace. It is only to those "who love God and are the called according to His purpose" that "all things work together for good."

They know that they work together for good. It is not a struggle to believe it. It is not a desperate effort to count it. When we walk with Him in holy trust and obedience, the inmost consciousness of our spiritual being bears witness to the promise, and we know without doubt or fear that all things are ours, for we are Christ's and Christ is God's.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SPIRIT OF THE RESURRECTION.

Ezekiel 37: 8.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—Rom. 8: 2.

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that hath raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."—Rom. 8: 11.

THE thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel is one of the most remarkable exhibitions of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testment, because it introduces with great clearness and definiteness the doctrine of the resurrection.

This truth, beyond all others, is characteristic of the system of redemption. It might be called the patent sign of the Gospel. Far more than the Cross, the symbol of baptism expresses the fundamental idea of the Christian religion; for, while the Cross speaks only of death, baptism tells also of resurrection and life.

This truth, foreshadowed in many Old Testament passages, and doubtless underlying the teaching of all the prophets, is brought out here with great distinctness, and makes the passage one of the marked ones of Old Testament revelation.

I.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

First, we have the vision in the valley of dry bones. This is not a vision of the resurrection proper, but rather of a special resurrection. The prophet is taken in the spirit into the valley of dry bones. It is the scene of some ancient battle, where he beholds around

him the skeletons of the fallen army, and, lo! they are very many, and, lo! they are very dry.

A generation has passed since they fell. The flesh has long ago withered from the skeletons, and the bones lie bleached and withered under the open sun. Suddenly the question comes to him, "Can these bones live?" And his wise answer is "Lord Thou knowest." Then there comes to him; first, the command to prophesy unto the bones, proclaiming to them the Word of the Lord, and announcing to them that they shall live. And, lo! there comes a noise and a shaking; and bone cleaves to his bone, and they assume the forms of men; but still there is no breath in them.

Then a second time the Word of the Lord comes to him, commanding him to prophesy unto the breath of life to come from the four winds and breathe upon these slain that they may live; and, lo! as he prophesies and commands, the spirit of life to come into these lifeless forms, there is a quivering moment, as the life passes into every frame, and they spring to their feet and stand before him a mass of living men, an exceeding great army.

II.

THE APPLICATION OF THIS TO ISRAEL AS A NATION

God does not leave the prophet in doubt as to the meaning of the vision. Its first and immediate application is to his people. They were mourning over their national ruin and saying, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts." But he tells them that the voice of God is yet to come to them; that the power of His Spirit is yet to breathe upon them; that even shattered and hopeless Israel shall revive; and that the nation shall spring to life once more and return to their own land to resume their place in God's great plan, while their divisions and disunions shall cease forever, and God shall dwell among

them and restore His ancient sanctuary and renew His covenant with them forevermore.

There could scarcely be a more appropriate figure of Israel's depressed condition than the vision of the dry bones. For eighteen centuries their hope has been dead in a far more terrible sense than was true even under the Babylonian captivity. It is not a century ago since the children of Israel were disfranchised outcasts of every nation. Even in Great Britain itself the voice of the pulpit and of the whole Christian press was raised against the first proposal to give the right of franchise to Hebrew citizens and to allow the children of Abraham a place and a name among the Gentiles.

For centuries they have been truly "outcasts of earth and reprobates of heaven," and the idea of their restoration to their own land, and to their ancient blessing, might well be deemed the most hopeless prospect that language could express. But, lo! already the vision of the prophet begins to be fulfilled. The Word of God respecting Israel has been recovered and reissued. God's people have begun to understand His purpose concerning Israel and have begun to preach the Gospel, even to the unbelieving sons of Abraham, and to proclaim to them, like the ancient prophet, the word of hope and promise, and to call them from their graves to their true Messiah and their only hope. And, lo! already there is a noise and a shaking; and bone is beginning to come to his bone, and a national revival of Judaism is one of the most marked signs of the day.

A spirit of reunion and reorganization is everywhere abroad among them. National societies are being formed. The rich and the poor are coming together. Great leaders of the nation are lending their financial strength to the cause of the helpless and the outcast. While as yet it is not a spiritual movement, but merely a reorganization of national life and hope, it is just what the prophet predicted would first come to pass; and he must

be blind indeed, who does not see the ancient vision being fulfilled today among the children of Israel in every nation under heaven.

But there is a deeper spiritual movement. The Holy Ghost is also beginning His saving work. The deeper heart of the nation is beginning to be touched; and some of her sons are recognizing their long rejected Messiah, and beginning to accept Him as their Saviour and their King.

These are but precursors of that latter rain which is to fall, when the Spirit of grace and of supplication shall be poured out upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they shall look upon Him whom they pierced and shall mourn for Him as one that mourneth for an only son. And then shall a fountian be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness, and all the blessed promises for Israel shall receive their spiritual fulfillment.

Then shall Israel and Judah be united. Then shall the severances of ages be forever healed. Then shall they be cleansed from their defilements and uncleanness and idolatries, to sin no more. Then shall they take the the place of God's chosen people; and, as the Queen of nations and the special witnesses of Jesus, the sons of Abraham shall fulfill their high calling, and their restoration shall be complete.

Then shall God's sanctuary be among them once more. Neither shall He hide His face from them any more, but they shall dwell forever in His covenant love, the Light of the world, and the Leader of the nations.

III.

THE APPLICATION OF THE VISION TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE SOUL AND THE CHURCH.

There is something worse than the death of a nation, something worse than the death of the body. It is the

spiritual death of those who lie sunk in trespasses and sins. The condition of human souls is like the bones in the valley of vision, very many and very dry. There is no human probability of restoration or life. But there is hope in God and in resurrection life.

There is the same twofold agency which we see in the nation. First is the Word of God. This is the divine instrument in the conversion of souls and the quickening of the spiritually dead. "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

Although souls are lost and dead, God commands us to proclaim to them the Word of God, and to tell them that He has sent them life, and is waiting to quicken them and bring them out of their graves.

This very word which they are unable to understand or feel or believe is the power through which they are to be awakened and brought to life. There is a strange potency in the Gospel to awaken the human conscience and to quicken the human spirit by the power of the Holy Ghost.

But the Word of God alone can bring about only an outward reformation like the baptism of John, which changed the lives of men and the forms and habits of their conversation; but it cannot put breath in them. And so the first effect is the abandonment of sin, the reformation of life, the assuming of the forms of righteousness, but there is no breath in them. The great agent in the real and vital transfiguration is the Spirit of the Living God, "the breath of life from the four winds of heaven."

There is something very significant about the way in which the prophet was commanded to address the Spirit. It was not the language of entreaty, but of command. Just as he was commanded to prophesy to the dry bones and to bid them live, so he is commanded to prophesy

unto the Holy Ghost and to bid the Spirit come and quicken those lifeless stones.

Is there not for us the significant suggestion and a solemn lesson that we are to speak the Gospel to men in the authority of God, and with the expectation of its power, and that we are to claim the Holy Ghost to accompany the words and to give efficacy to our testimony and work with the same authority? That we are not only to ask Him and invoke Him, but to command Him and to use Him, and fully to expect His almighty efficiency to accomplish the work for which He sent us?

Just as the laws of electricity, when properly understood, place at our command the forces of electricity, so, when we yield to the laws of the Spirit's operation, we may command the Spirit's operation and fully count upon His almighty working and infinite power. Is not this the real meaning of faith and the real province of prayer in the ministry of the Gospel? Is not this the secret of many of our failures? Do we command Him as we might? Do we use these infinite forces which God has placed at our service for the accomplishment of the work for which He has sent us?

The effect of the Holy Spirit's work is not a mere reformation, but a transformation. The forms of life are quickened into real life, and the men spring to their feet and stand before him, "an exceeding great army." They do not now need to be carried. They are themselves self-supporting; nay, they become an army of mighty power, and go forth in aggressive conflict to fight against the enemies of God and to impart to others the blessing which they themselves have received.

This mighty Holy Spirit is recognized as present in the world. The four winds indicate the four quarters of the earth, and they suggest the omnipresence and the ever-presence of that blessed Spirit who is with the

Church, through the Christian dispensation, as the enduement of power for every commission on which the Master has sent her. Shall we claim our high and divine resources? Shall we utilize the infinite and all-sufficient supplies which our Master has committed to us? And shall we, with a simpler, bolder confidence, give forth the authoritative Word, and call down the Almighty Spirit to quicken the dry bones of a lifeless Church and to awaken the spiritually dead, that Christ may give them life?

IV.

THE FUTURE RESURRECTION.

While this passage is not a literal vision of the resurrection from the dead, at the same time it assumes it and takes it for granted. That glorious doctrine is more fully unfolded and differentiated in the teachings of the New Testament. We see it first in its great pledge and first fruit, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see it next in the resurrection of His people at His coming, and we see the vision of it in its final and glorious age at the consummation of all faith.

In every instance it will be, in some measure, at least, the work of the Holy Spirit. He who is working out the spiritual resurrection now, will accomplish it at the glorious appearing of our Lord, and will change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

We shall not dwell on this glorious doctrine now. It will be much more fully unfolded in later Scriptures. It is our blessed hope, and already we have its divine pattern and pledge in the first begotten from the dead, the glorious Prince of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ.

V.

THE APPLICATION OF THE VISION TO THE WHOLE REALM OF FAITH AND SPIRITUAL POWER.

There is a greater truth presented than even the literal resurrection. The thought lying back of the prophet's vision, and the profound truth which it throws forward upon the prospective of faith is that the resurrection is the pattern and the guarantee of all that God is able and willing to do in response to the faith of His people.

Expressed in a single sentence, the thought is that we have a resurrection God, and we ought to have a resurrection faith. Is not this the sublime thought which the Apostle Paul has presented in the magnificent climax of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where he prays that the "eyes of your understanding being enlighten; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe!"

Now comes the measure and standard of that power, "According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Henceforth, the standard of faith and the measure of God's working for His people is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When any trying situation presents itself, when any hard question is asked, and unbelief seems to say, "Can these bones live?" we have the simple answer, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God."

There are things that are darker than the grave and sadder than death. There are spiritual situations; there are family troubles; there are business difficulties; there are catastrophes and calamities; there are needs and trials compared with which the tears of bereavement are sweet, and the darkness of the sepulchre is bright indeed. But, thank God, we can meet these difficulties, these trials, these situations, these seeming impossibilities, and say, "Our trust is not in ourselves, but in God, who raiseth the dead. Who delivered us from so great a death, who doth deliver, in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us." This is our hope for the hour of fierce temptation, for the time of sorrow and trial, for the conflict with sickness and pain, for the desperate campaign with the powers of the darkness as we go forth to save men and evangelize the world and bring the coming of our Lord.

All these are situations too hard for us; but, thank God, we can meet them every one with the God of the resurrection, with the hope of the resurrection, with the faith of the resurrection, with the life of the resurrection, with the pledge of the resurrection, and say, "Yes, it is all true. With men it is impossible—BUT GOD—who raiseth the dead."

Break from your fears, ye saints, and tell
How high your great Deliverer reigns;
Sing how He spoiled the hosts of hell,
And led the monster Death in chains.

Say, "Live forever, Wondrous King,
Born to redeem and strong to save;"
Then ask the Monster, "Where's thy sting,
And where's thy victory, boasting grave?"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RIVER OF BLESSING.

"Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

"Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out the waters on the right side.

"And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and He brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

"Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

"Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

"And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

"Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

"Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east coutry, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

"And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

"And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim: they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

"But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

"And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."—Ezekiel 47: 1-12.

THIS magnificent prophetic vision is doubtless a picture of the literal restoration of Israel's temple and Israel's race in the future days of millennial promise. Conceding this, it is quite legitimate for us to apply it also to the present working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of His people, and in the midst of His Church, which is the temple of the living God.

Our Lord Jesus has Himself identified the living water in His beautiful words in the seventh chapter of the Gospel of John. There, amid the sacred solemnities of that ancient temple and the Feast of Tabernacles, He applied to Himself the beautiful figure of the water that was being poured out before their eyes, and cried and said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of His inmost being shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified)."

This is an exact paraphrase of the meaning of the vision of Ezekiel. It represents the Holy Spirit as a river of water flowing from the inmost being of a consecrated heart, and becoming rivers of blessing to others.

There is something about the entire imagery of this picture so oriental, so sublime, so rich, that, like a beautiful flower, we cannot analyze it too much without destroying some of its symmetry and sweetness. It speaks of something as glorious as the rich symbolism of the picture.

It speaks of the crystal stream and the deepening,

broadening rivers flowing through desert lands, and transforming them into gardens of luxuriant beauty and verdure. It speaks of perennial fruits and leaves of healing and even the Dead Sea itself reclaimed by its healing waters, until it becomes a place of fishermen who stand upon its shores from end to end gathering their shoals of fishes. Finally, the Temple itself becomes the abode of God, and is named "Jehovah Shammah," the Lord is there.

There is something about such figures that cannot be analyzed. There is a freedom, a glow, a vague but real splendor, a something which is unutterable and full of glory, which truly describes a certain elevated phrase of our spiritual experience. There are things in our Christian life which, if you translate into coarse speech, become like the petals of a dissected flower, withered and dead; but let them alone, and they are full of life and joy. You cannot translate them, you cannot always understand them. It is the voice of the Spirit within you crying with unutterable groanings or unutterable joy. It is as full as the magnificent river, as pure as the crystal water, as fresh as the morning dew, as healing as the leaves of the tree of life, and as full of power and blessing as that river that made everything live where it came.

Our hymnology is not exaggerated when we sing:

"I am dwelling on the mountain,
Where the golden sunlight gleams,
O'er a land whose fadeless beauty
Far exceeds my fondest dreams.
Where the air is pure, ethereal,
Laden with breath of flowers.
They are blooming on the mountain,
'Neath the amaranthine bowers."

But let us, notwithstanding, interpret as much as we may the rich and suggestive imagery of the picture.

The first thing that strikes a thoughtful reader is the

direction of this river. We know it represents the Holy Spirit, the blessed Person whose ministry is to cleanse, satisfy, comfort, help, and heal the disciples of Christ. But why is it flowing out and not in? Are we not always trying to get this river to run into us? Are we not always seeking a blessing and a baptism? But here the sanctuary seems to have only one business, to give out the water; and this river only one thing to do, to go forth on its ministry of unselfish mercy. That is the true life of the Holy Ghost. The true purpose of the Spirit in coming to us is to make us workers together with God, whose one business is ever loving, ever blessing, ever giving.

It was not after this river became deep and full that it began to flow out; but from the first little trickling drop it was at the same business. The Temple might have said, when the first two or three droplets began to ooze from beneath the threshold, "I can never spare you; you must remain in my reservoir." But no; it simply sent them forth, and away they went on their ministry of love; and so on to the end it was ever flowing, and, when it reached the Dead Sea, its living power was so great that the sea became transformed into life and freshness.

The real secret of the Dead Sea was that it had no outlet; it was just a great reservoir through the ages. But as it begins to overflow, it lives. Beloved, this is the secret of spiritual weakness and disappointment. You want a blessing for yourself. Begin to live for God and others, and He will give it back tenfold to you again.

The second thing we learn about this river is that it flows from a sanctuary. What is a sanctuary? It is a sacred, separated, holy, and divine place. First, it must be separated from sinful and common uses. Secondly, it must be dedicated to God and belong exclusively to Him. Thirdly, it must be occupied by God and be

filled with Him as its Possessor, its Guest, and the Object of its worship.

In this sense the truly consecrated believer is God's sanctuary when he separates himself from all evil unto God, dedicates himself to be the property of the Most Holy, and receives the Holy Ghost to dwell in him, and to represent the Trinity as the occupant and owner of his heart and life. This is the sanctuary. This is holiness. This is the true Christian life, and from such a soul as this the river will always flow.

But you cannot be a blessing to others beyond your personal experience. You cannot give what you have not got. You cannot bring pure water out of an unclean fountain. Why are we not greater blessings? Because our hearts are not sanctuaries. We try to do a little for God and then find the whole hindered by a thousand forbidden uses; and God will have no partnership with evil, and will accept no service which is mixed or compromised.

Beloved, let us consecrate ourselves. Let Him sanctify us, fill us, and then flow from us in all the fullness of the Holy Ghost.

The third thing about this river is that it flowed from under the threshold of the sanctuary. It did not come from the roof, or from some hill behind it, or from the fountain in the holy court; but it came from the lowest place, from under the stairs, where people trod as they passed by. And so the Holy Ghost comes from the lowly heart, consecrates the humble spirit, uses the man who is most dead and who has become so lost to himself and all his graces that God can have all the glory, and can fill him without measure.

The fourth thing about the river is its direction. It is flowing toward the east. It is the river of the morning, not the river of the night. It does not represent the old life, whose sun is going down; but it represents the new life which has risen with the resur-

rection of Christ, and is looking out into the everlasting morning. It is a new and resurrection life, and it flows ever toward the rising sun.

This river begins in a few little trickling drops. It is scarcely a rivulet for the first half mile. It is so small that it just oozes from under the threshold, a few drops of moisture, but it becomes a mighty stream before it reaches the sea. So the Holy Ghost loves to begin in "the day of small things." He loves to speak to us in "the still, small voice," to show us that we are not very far off. If He shouted in our ear, it would be an intimation that He was at a great distance or that we were very stupid. There is no sweeter expression of confidence than a whispered secret. The blessed Holy Ghost comes to us with the faintest touches of His breath; and if we do not recognize Him in these small beginnings, we shall not see their growth and development, and we shall wonder all our days why we did not get the blessing. We are looking for wind and rain, for a cyclone of power, for electric storms, when the air is full of divine electric fire. We have only to make the connection, to take it as we need it, and to turn it on to all the machinery of our life.

Beloved, if you will recognize the first touches of God, the faintest whispers of His answering voice, the little finger of His touch, behind which stands all His omnipotence, He will prove to you that it is not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts.

The first stage of the river's course was about half a mile from the source. There the prophet was halted by his attendant and caused to pass over the little brook, and, lo! it had increased until it was "water to the ankles." The Hebrew word is much more expressive. It means literally water to the soles of the feet. There was very little water there, perhaps not quarter of an inch deep, and if the prophet had despised it,

he would have been kept out of all the glory of the vision. But he put his feet in the little water that he found. There was enough for the soles of his feet, and that was enough for him.

Is not this just what is said to us, "Every place the soles of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given you"?

What shall we call this putting down of our feet in the waters? Is it, perhaps, the act of stepping out on God's Spirit, of venturing on Him, of standing on His promises, of counting upon Him, of putting our weight upon Him, of trusting Him for everything, and publicly recognizing and confessing Him as our life and strength? Or does it mean obedience? Do the feet represent the steppings of duty? Is this not also one of the earliest stages of the Spirit's work? He comes to teach us faith and obedience, and He always requires us to do something very early in our spiritual career, something that often costs sacrifice, something that proves the sincerity of our motive, something that means everything to us; but as we obey Him and go on, we find Him coming to us in fuller measure, and giving us deeper revelations and leading us on to a larger fullness.

Beloved, shall we take both steps, and put our feet in the flood, and walk in the Spirit, and accept boldly and lovingly all the good and acceptable and perfect will of God?

"Waters to the kness." This is the ministry of prayer in the Spirit that follows a life of obedience and faithfulness to God. He will take us into the secret place of the Most High, and will permit us to bear the burdens of others and to share with Him the priesthood which He ever fulfills before the throne. This is more than our words and works. This is a place of real power, but it must be baptized in the Spirit or it will be fruitless and vain.

Next, we have "the waters to the loins." This is the girding of power, the baptism of the Spirit for service. The girding of the loins is the symbol of service and strength. God gives power to His servants to speak in His name with effectiveness and to accomplish the glorious results for which He has commissioned them. Without this power we have no business to attempt any service for God. Jesus did not begin His ministry until he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and it is presumption for us to dare to do so.

Next, we have the waters overhead, "a river to swim in." The waters had grown so deep now that the prophet is himself powerless even to cross them. His own movements are impossible, and all he can do is to lie upon the bosom of the current and let it carry him.

This speaks of a time where we come to the end of our own effort and fall into the fullness of God. Henceforth our work is God working in us, and we are just like the swimmer on the bosom of the river carried by the tide, but far stronger than if he were fording it, for he has all the strength of the river on his side. Of course, there had to be a surrender of his own work.

There must, of course, be a surrender of our own life before we can fall into the strength of God. Then shall we inherit all the fullness of the divine omnipotence; so far as we are in union with God's help, we shall have God's power. This power is spontaneous. Without a struggle, it springs from a source beyond ourselves, and it flows like the ever changing river.

Next, we notice the fruits upon the bank of this glorious river. There are fruits for the food of the saints, perennial fruits, fruits of infinite variety; all the trees of paradise are restored, renewing their harvest every month; each joy is a new joy, fresh as the fruits and flowers of paradise. Even the very leaves are for healing. They are not the most important part of the tree, but they have their place; and so the Lord's healing

through the Holy Ghost is one of the ministries of the Spirit, but not His highest ministry, corresponding to the leaf of the tree while the fruit corresponds to the deeper spiritual life.

Then there are other fruits, especially the fruit of precious souls. The fishermen are standing on the shores of the Dead Sea gathering in their precious shoals.

What a solemn picture the Dead Sea was, hard by Jerusalem's gate, continually reminding the world of the hell that lies near the gate of heaven! Yonder was Zion and the Temple, but yonder also was the sea of death and the gate of hell.

Ah, still it is ever so! While we are rejoicing in the blessed fullness of the Spirit, hard by our gates are the masses of wretchedness and sin, the depths of danger and sorrow that crowd our mighty and sinful city and our poor lost world. But as we are filled with the power of the Spirit, we, too, shall go forth as fishers of men to gather precious souls for Christ in the power of the Spirit, and to turn the deserts of life into places of blessing, so that "everything wherever the river comes shall live."

There is one more picture. It is in the last chapter of the book. "The name of the city from that day shall be called Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there."

This blessed river brings the Lord. This blessed Holy Spirit brings the abiding presence of God, and He is better than all His gifts, graces, and operations. He is seeking a home in some of our hearts. The Holy Spirit is knocking at the door to find entrance for the King of Glory. If we will let Him in, He will make it His palace and His home and dwell with us forever. To be the dwelling place of God, is the highest and sublimest glory of the Spirit's indwelling in the saint.

Like the ancient architect, who, when asked to build a temple for the sun, after others had constructed their

beautiful models of granite and polished marble and resplendent gold, brought a design made of simple transparent glass, and said, "This is the true temple for the sun, for the sun himself can dwell within it and pass out and in without restraint."

God is wanting temples for Himself as transparent as the colorless glass, reflecting not their own glory but His; receiving Him without the necessity of opening a single door, but with every channel and capacity of ours so free, so open, and so in touch, that we live and move and have our being in Him, and He can find in us that congenial abode for which He searches the mighty universe and the highest heaven in vain; for are not we also "the fullness of Him who filleth all in all"?

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE DAYS OF THE RESTORATION.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."—Zechariah 4: 6.

THE restoration was a period of Jewish history as distinctly marked as the Patriarchal or the Mosaic age, the times of the Judges, or the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It followed the captivity, and was intended to prepare the way for a yet greater event, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was one of the most marked periods of divine working in the Old Testament, and it is full of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. This little message which Zechariah gave to his people as the motto of that Restoration, more fitly than any other word expresses its entire history. It was a movement, not of human power, but of the Holy Ghost.

It was unaccompanied by the miraculous signs which attended almost every other important period of Old Testament history; but its providential miracles and its manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit were even more signal and wonderful than the miracles of the wilderness and the land of promise.

Let us trace the workings of the Holy Spirit through this wonderful period.

I.

The first stage might be described as the ministry of prayer. We have an account of it in the ninth chapter of the Book of Daniel. "In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in

the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by the books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face upon the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes."

When God is about to work out any great purpose, He usually lays it as a burden of prayer upon the heart of some of His saints whom He can fully trust. So He called Daniel, His tried servant in Babylon, to this high ministry of prayer.

We cannot fail to notice the connection of Daniel's prayer with Jeremiah's prophecy. Seventy years before, the prophet of God had announced, not only the fact, but the duration of Judah's captivity; and Daniel had been carefully studying the sacred scroll and marked the period of his people's affliction. Now that the time seemed to have run its course, he was encouraged to go to God in intercessions and plead for the fulfillment of His promise and the accomplishment of the inspired prophecy.

Some would have said that, because God was going to do it, they should not be troubled about it. Why not wait and let Him work out His own counsel? But to true faith the promise of God is a direct incentive to prayer.

True faith always finds its warrant in the Word of God, and because it has pleased Him to commit Himself to us in the Word of Promise, we feel encouraged to present our petition, and to believe for its answer.

Not lightly did Daniel pray, but for three full weeks he humbled himself in fasting and prayer before his God. He was not praying for himself. He was not borne down by the weight of his own trial and care. His prayer was wholly disinterested and altogether for his country and his people and the glory of his God.

This is true prayer, and this is divine partnership with God Himself. This is the highest and holiest ministry given to mortal, and brings us into direct fellowship with our ascended and interceding Lord.

Not in vain did Daniel thus cry to heaven. In due time a messenger came to him from the sky, and directly announced to him; first, that he was greatly beloved; and, next, that his prayer was heard and answered, and that from the very first day that he had set himself to ask it of God, God had recorded the answer in the decrees of the throne, and had set in motion all the forces of His power to accomplish it.

Indeed, this mighty angel had been three weeks on his way, hindered by the powers of darkness, and the principalities that rule over the governments of this world.

What a vision this gives us of the living forces of the world unseen, and of the power of prayer to press through all those labyrinths of evil to reach the heart and hand of God and the sceptre of the universe!

Dear saint of God, you may be humble and unknown, you may have little talent and little wealth; but alone in your closet, you can touch the confines of the world, and set in motion forces which will influence the destiny of nations.

Yonder in Babylon we see a lowly suppliant on his face before God, in sackcloth and ashes and deep earnestness of heart. It looks to us like a spectacle of impotence. But wait; look a little further. Stretch your vision to the far circumference of yonder circle, and you shall see a mighty conqueror pausing in his career of triumph, issuing a decree from his throne, recognizing the power of Jehovah, and bringing all the forces of his government to carry out the prayer of that saint of God.

You shall see a long train of captives hastening from their exile to their distant home, and centuries on centuries of national prosperity reaching away down

to Messianic times, and far beyond to millennial ages, All is the result of the prayer of Daniel, the beloved of the Lord.

The angel that came to him told him of the years that should intervene until the close of the Old Testament dispensation. He told him of the coming of the great Messiah. He told Him of His sacrifice and its blessed efficacy. He told him of the trials and troubles that should come to his people afterwards, and he reached out to the most distant ages, down even to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory. O friends, when you talk to God and rise out of your own troubles, and stand with Him in the high and holy ministry of prayer, you get a much larger answer than you expect. God not only gives you what you ask, but He gives you an eternity beyond. "Lord, teach us to pray."

II.

The next stage of the working of the Holy Spirit is seen in the providential movements which introduce the Restoration.

The first and most remarkable of these was the career of Cyrus. More than a century before, the prophet Isaiah had described this extraordinary man. He had even called him by his name and pointed him out as the special instrument of the divine purpose in the restoration of Israel. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel, mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me."

What a wonderful picture! What marvelous prophecy, and how literally it was fulfilled in the romantic story of Cyrus, his rapid career of conquest, his capture of Babylon, the establishment of his universal empire, and then his remarkable part in the restoration of Israel and the rebuilding of the temple!

The next chapter in this extraordinary series of events is the proclamation of Cyrus in the first verses of the book of Ezra. "Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

"Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem."

"Also Cyrus the king, brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; even those did Cyrus bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer."

Here we see the conqueror of the world, in the very flush of his renown, turned aside by a divine impulse, and constrained to carry out the very purpose and will of God.

Oh, how wonderful the power of the Holy Ghost! He is able to deal with the hearts and minds of men, the highest as well as the lowest, and to overrule even their selfish ambitions and plans for the carrying out of His own purposes and the building up of His own kingdom.

He who has sent us His ambassadors to the nations has declared, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth." "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turneth it withsoever he will."

Could we but believe more definitely in the power and providence of God, how much larger would our plans of service be, and how much less would we fear the oppositions of men!

We are living in the days when we may especially claim the overruling providence of God in the affairs of men, and when we may call upon the Holy Ghost to co-operate with the Church of Christ in sending the Gospel to the world, and hastening the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the history of missions there have been some very wonderful instances of God's interposing power through the affairs of nations.

The story of Japan, the story of Siam, the story of Madagascar, the Indian Mutiny, and the history of China for half a century are full of romances of providence as significant as the story of Cyrus. God has many such things in store for the hearts that can trust Him.

Oh, let us understand the immensity of our God and the far-reaching scope of His providence and His power, and enter into partnership with Him in His great design to give the Kingdom to His Son. The Ancient of Days has come, and is judging among the nations,

to give the Son of Man His Kingdom, dominion, and glory. Let us recognize His Presence, and let us claim, as in the days old, the operation of His mighty power.

How sublime and solemn the spectacle upon which the eyes of the Church are gazing today! The mighty Colossus of China, so long opposed to foreign influence and the Gospel of Christ, is being broken to pieces like a potter's vessel, and plowed up as with the plowshare of God to prepare the way of the Lord. Doubtless it is in answer to some prayer of faith. Doubtless it is preparatory to some glorious aggressive movement of faith and evangelistic zeal. God help us to understand our times and to understand our God, and to be worthy of our high calling as workers together with Him!

Another extraordinary providential working of the Holy Ghost during these days is found in the story of Esther. It was another miracle of Providence, although on a different plane, and in a simpler sphere. This time a nation was to be delivered from extermination. The very race of Israel was to be preserved so as to form a line through which Christ could come. The devil had determined to blot out their existence, but God raised up a little maiden to be His instrument for their deliverance.

He had given Esther a beautiful face and a fair and attractive form; and these were trusts which He meant her to use for Him. He gave her favor in the eyes of the king, and He introduced her to his palace and his throne. Dear young friend, your face, your form, your place in society, these are mighty trusts to use for God. Take heed how you use them. There came a time when Esther must stand forth and fulfill her high commission, and even risk her life for the sake of her country. She hesitated; and had she faltered it would have involved, perhaps, not only the ruin of her people, but the destruction of herself and her father's

house. God gave her grace to be true, and through her true, brave stand, her people were delivered.

The enemies of God were caught in the snare which they had prepared. So God today is working through individuals as well as nations. May He enable us, like Esther of old, to understand His solemn message, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Quite as remarkable is the story of Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the returning captives.

It was no small undertaking to conduct a band of 50,000 unarmed men and women and children across that vast desert, but Ezra so fully trusted God that he would not even ask an escort. How touching his language! "Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all of our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all of them for good that seek him: but his power and his wrath is against all that forsake him. So we fasted, and besought our God for this; and he was entreated of us" (Ezra 8:21). "Then we departed from the river of Ahava, on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem; and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. And we came to Jerusalem."

This was the work of the Holy Spirit, and thus He loves to guard and guide those who trust in Him. Their task was a most difficult one. First, they attempted to build the temple without restoring the walls. Their primary object was to set up the worship of their God, and they trusted Him to be a wall of fire round about and the glory in the midst.

They were surrounded by jealous foes who tried in every way to defeat their plan, and sometimes succeeded in delaying their work; but through innumerable vicissitudes and deliverances God safely brought them, until the temple was renewed, and the walls arose under Nehemiah, and the social and political foundations of their national life were once more restored.

This is the true secret of success in every work for God. This is the true meaning of the Church of Christ today. God is her Living Head, and the Holy Ghost is her all-sufficient Defender, her All-sufficiency and Guide; and those who fully trust Him never fail to find Him true and equal to all their exigencies and needs.

III.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE MESSAGES OF HIS INSPIRED SERVANTS.

While God raised up Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Joshua, Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah to lead this great restoration, He also sent His prophetic messenger to aid them by his counsel. By their divine messages, there were three special prophets connected with the work of the restoration, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Malachi's work belongs properly to a later period, and closes the Old Testament dispensation. Haggai and Zechariah were contemporaries. The one was an old man, the other was a young man. God has need of both classes in the ministry of His Church. We have time at present to refer to Haggai's messages only.

There were several. The first was one of stern rebuke. The people had begun to forget their great trust, and, instead of rebuilding the house of God in Jerusalem, were erecting for themselves costly homes and becoming absorbed in selfish comfort and ambition. The prophet comes with a very solemn rebuke.

"Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in ceiled houses,

and this house lie waste?" His heart-searching cry is, "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord."

His message was not in vain. The officers and the people rose up and went to work with fidelity and zeal.

Seven weeks later Haggai is authorized to deliver to the people a very different message full of divine encouragement and glorious promise, "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not."

The Holy Spirit was to be their guide and strength. Again and again the phrase is repeated, "Saith the Lord." It was the word of God, the presence of God, the Spirit of God, that was to be their dependence and their divine resource through all this great undertaking. And then the promise reaches out into all the grandeur of a millennial vision.

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace saith the Lord of hosts."

They were building a house that was to be visited in the coming centuries by the Son of God Himself, and that was to be glorified by His miracles of love and words of grace. Little did they realize the glory, the

latter glory for which they were laying foundations. In a still later vision the prophet looks forward to the overthrow of nations and kingdoms, and the coming of the Lord Jesus Himself, and the recompense which then will await Zerubbabel and his faithful laborers when the Lord shall make them like a signet of glory and honor.

This may be the glory of our work. This is the glory of all work done in the power of the Spirit. It is done for the coming of the Lord, and it will receive its recompense in that day of manifestations. Oh, let this be our high ambition!

Perhaps the house we build for Him will yet be trodden by the feet of the Son of man. The souls we bring to Him shall be presented in that day as our crown of rejoicing and His. The world that we win for Him shall be our kingdom as well as His in the day of His millennial reign. Yes, if we may but haste that coming and prepare the way by the evangelization of the nations, it may be our blessed hope and transcendent privilege, ourselves to live to meet Him in His glorious advent, and to welcome Him back to the world for which He died, then to share with Him the days, the ages of blessing and glory, which fill the vision of the prophetic age.

Oh, let our work take hold upon His coming, and be dignified and glorified by the same promise that cheered the heart of the restoration workers, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

The prophetic messages of Zechariah were still more rich and full, but we must defer to another chapter the unfolding of his sublime and instructive images of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE OLIVE TREES AND THE GOLDEN LAMPS.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."—Zech. 4: 6.

WE have already looked at these words in connection with the history of the Restoration and the mighty movements of God's providence in bringing about that glorious result. We also referred to the prophetic ministry of Haggai, the elder of the two prophets who were God's messengers of counsel and encouragement to the leaders and people at this crisis

Still more remarkable was the ministry of Zechariah, the younger prophet. His wondrous visions were all calculated to meet some special need and trial in their situation at this time.

The first vision was that of the man among the mulberry trees. The prophet saw in a vision a great plain of low, flat land covered with mulberry trees, and among them were horses moving to and fro. This represented the lowly condition of God's people; and the horses, God's ministers of power, who were moving in the midst of His people's trials and working for their deliverance. This was followed by a message of special encouragement, announcing that these low and desolate regions should yet be filled with multitudes of people, that the cities, through prosperity, should yet be spread abroad; and that the Lord should comfort Zion, and would choose Jerusalem.

Next came the vision of the horns and the carpenters. Four horns appeared before the prophet's view, representing the enemies that were scattering Judah and pushing to the wall God's suffering people. But coming up behind them, were four carpenters, sent to fray

the piercing horns of the enemy, and blunt their points, so that they would not be able to touch or harm God's suffering children. There were just as many carpenters as there were horns, and God's people in every age may know that wherever there is a foe to strike there is a force to counteract for those who trust Him.

Next came the vision of the man with the measuring line, going forth to measure the walls of Jerusalem, its length and its breadth, and proclaiming: "Jerusalem shall yet be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitudes of men and cattle therein." This was intended to encourage them amid the paucity of the population. A little handful of returned captives, they were trying to occupy the desolate land, and they seemed so few and contemptible that their enemies turned them to ridicule; but God declared that they would yet spread abroad and cover all the land. And as they looked at their unwalled city and the defenceless temple they were rearing in its midst, and thought of their exposure to all the surrounding enemies, God reassured them, through the prophet, with the precious promise, "I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."

Next there came a still more encouraging vision. All the power of their enemies outside could not hurt them half so much as their own weakness and unworthiness within. They were conscious of their sinfulness, and they knew that they had already suffered for their fathers' unfaithfulness. They might fear that they, too, should forfeit the blessing of Jehovah. And so the prophet was sent with another vision. He beheld Joshua, the high priest, representing the people, standing before the Lord clothed with filthy garments, suggesting their guilt and sin, and Satan standing at his right hand, to resist him.

But as he gazed, lo! the command is given from the throne, "Take away the filthy garments from him, . . .

and I will clothe him with a change of raiment, . . . and set a fair mitre on his head," and, turning to the accuser, Jehovah answered all his reproaches, and said: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Then the vision was followed by a gracious promise of cleansing and blessing summed up in the glorious promise, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." God stood not only between them and their enemies, but also between them and themselves, and all their own unworthiness and sinfulness. He thus stands between us and our guilt, our shield from the accusing of our conscience and the charges of our cruel adversary, so that we can cry, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

But now we come to the vision of our text, the most beautiful and significant of all, and unequalled by any other portion of the Holy Scriptures for delicacy and depth of sacred meaning.

It was intended to reveal to them the sources of their strength. They were weak, and their foes were strong. At this very time, through the intrigues of their enemies, a decree had come from the king of Persia, arresting for a time the progress of the work. We are told by Ezra that an army came and "with force and power" caused the work to cease. But, like the echo of man's impotent rage answering back from the throne, God sends Zechariah to say in the very same phrase turned back again, "Not by force, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Man had sent his force and power, his army and his might; but he had left God out of his calculations, and this work and this conflict was "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of

hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it!"

The vision itself was a very beautiful one. As he wakened out of sleep with all his powers quickened to take in its meaning, he saw before him a golden candlestick like that which stood in the holy place, with its seven branches of polished gold, surmounted by a vessel of oil and a glowing flame. Then above this candlestick there was a large bowl or reservoir connected by pipes with all the lamps, and containing the supply of oil. But how was this reservoir filled?

Look again at the wondrous and exquisite mechanism. There were no oil cans, no ministering hands, no clumsy machinery of human attendants or conveying tubes, but two living olive trees ripening their fruit continually and pouring it in through two olive branches into the reservoir, from which it flowed down into each of the lamps. How simple, how beautiful, how perfect, and how full of holy meaning! What is its profound spiritual meaning?

I.

THE CANDLESTICK.

The golden candlestick represents the Church of God and the people of God. "Ye are the light of the world." "Let your light so shine before men that they shall see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Israel of old was to that generation what the Church is meant to be today, the depository of divine truth and life and light, the true light of the world. As the candlestick was all of gold, so the true Church of Christ consists only of those who are partakers of the divine nature. Gold is the type of the divine, and only as

we are restored to the image of God and filled with His light and presence can we be lightbearers for the world.

The candlestick was the only light of the temple. It had no windows. All its light came from God. And the world has no light apart from the Church of God. This holy book, illuminated by the Spirit, contains all that we know of God, redemption, and the future life.

He is a foolish man who tries to deceive himself and his people by the torchlight of his own eloquence, philosophy, and sensationalism.

The candlestick was one, yet manifold; and so the Church of God has infinite variety, and yet but one light and one body. God does not level every soul down to the same pattern, but He lets Isaiah and James and John to be each himself; and yet He fills all with God, and makes their life divine, yet perfectly natural, simple, free, and human.

Every part of our nature has to pass through the new creation, but every part is preserved, sanctified, and filled with God. So the whole spirit and soul and body is preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The candlestick was not luminous. It was simply a light-bearer. It could make no light. It could reflect light from its polished and brilliant surface, but the light must come from another source. So we have no light in ourselves; we can simply receive the light and hold it. We are not ourselves the light of the world, but we are to so shine that men shall see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven.

We are to reveal not our goodness and our grace, but Christ in us. Let all men see how helpless and insufficient we are in ourselves, but what an all-sufficient and mighty Saviour we have, and One available for them as well as for us. This is the light that the world needs, that the Holy Ghost and the person and grace

of Jesus be held forth for their darkness and misery. and sin.

The business of the candlestick was not to hoard the oil, but to consume it, to use it up, and to keep it ever burning in those glowing tongues of flame. If the lamps and pipes had tried to absorb and retain the oil, they would have lost it. They gave it up, they used it up. They consumed it in ceaseless burning. Men sometimes say to us: "Don't expend all your vitality; don't use all your strength; save yourself." Ah, that is the way to lose yourself. Only that which we give we have. That which we keep we lose.

Try to hold on to one of God's gifts, and it will go. Try to economize and keep for yourself your blessing, and it will disappear. Pass it on and it will burn forever. As those lamps exhausted the oil in their little cups, the residue of the oil poured in from above; and they were always full, and always fresh, and always burning, and always shining.

So let us be "burning and shining lights," and, as we give out what He has given, He will replenish the supply, and we shall have enough and to spare; and we, too, shall "shine in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation."

II.

THE OIL IS THE EMBLEM OF THE HOLY GHOST.

It is He who gives us all our light and life. It is He who produces in us all our graces, and works through us all our service for God and men.

Beloved, this is the test, and this is the difference between man and God. Five of the virgins were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their vessels, but they took no oil in their vessels with their lamps; but they that were wise took oil in their vessels

with their lamps, and when the Bridegroom came this was the point of separation.

The foolish virgins were virgins, too. They were pure; they were waiting and longing for the coming of the Bridegroom; they had a little light, and they had oil enough to light the lamp and keep it burning for a time; but they had not the residue of the oil, they had not the fullness of the Spirit, they had not the indwelling of the personal Holy Ghost. And so their lamps went out in their hour of need. They were unable to go in with the marriage procession.

The one point which settled the happy fate of the others was simply this, that they had "oil in their vessels with their lamps." They had the Holy Ghost personally indwelling. They had the source of grace within their hearts. They did not need to go and replenish. They were always ready.

Beloved, let a word be sufficient for the wise, and, oh! let us be filled with the Spirit, so that we shall be found of Him in peace.

III.

THE SOURCES OF THE OIL.

We come to the most beautiful and significant part of the picture, the sources of the oil. These were not the same human mechanism of ministering priests and great reservoirs from which the oil was carried and replenished day by day, but two living trees whose ripening fruit was continually pressed out by hands unseen, and flowed through two olive branches and two golden pipes down into the reservoir and into the lamps. It was all perfectly spontaneous, simple, silent, and divine. The oil was always flowing; the reservoir was always full; the lamps were always burning.

This is the source of our divine supply. Who were these two olive trees? Certainly they can represent

nothing human, but the divine source of our life in Christ. They represent the Lord Jesus Christ and the blessed Holy Ghost; the one on the divine side, the other on the earthly side of our spiritual life. Both are called by the same name. The apostle John speaks of Jesus as our Advocate or Paraclete with the Father, and he speaks of the Holy Ghost as our Paraclete from the Father. The one is the Advocate yonder, the other is the Advocate within.

One is on each side of us, and between two such Advocates how can a child of God be lost? From these two blessed Persons of the Godhead, distinct in their personality, yet one in their nature, we draw our spiritual life. We draw it as the olive trees gave forth their oil, spontaneously, silently, constantly, instinctively, just as we breathe the air in which we live, just as the blood circulates through our system, so quietly, so naturally, so simply, that we are unconscious of the process.

Thus we may abide in Him and live upon Him, and draw our strength from God alone. Beloved, have we learned the secret of the olive trees, the secret of abiding in Him?

But, what are these two olive branches that connect the olive trees with the reservoir and run into two golden pipes?

These are "the two anointed ones, or, the two sons of oil, that stand before the Lord of the whole earth." Ah! this is the ministry of believing and united prayer. This is the highest service given to saints on earth, a counterpart of the priestly service of Jesus Himself upon the throne.

Beloved, if we will let Him, God will teach us this high and holy service. First, these branches must come out of the trees and be so closely in touch with them that they can communicate directly and draw their very life; and so he that ministers at the altar of prayer must be in perfect touch with God on the heaven-side.

But on the other side, he must be in perfect touch with man. The branches must run into the reservoir and connect with the lamps.

So if we would know this ministry of prayer, we must be sensitive to the needs of others. We must be lost to our selfishness. We must be in touch with our fellow-men. We must have a heart full of sympathy and love, and readiness to suffer for others and for God.

God give us this glorious ministry and teach us to know the meaning of that mighty promise, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

IV.

1. The effects of the Holy Spirit's working will appear first in the overturning of obstacles. "Who art thou, O great mountain?" There is always a mountain of difficulty in the way of faith. The best evidence of God's presence and power is the activity of the adversary. Faith does not fear the highest mountain when the Holy Ghost is in charge, but trustingly and quietly stands, and says, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Be a plain." The Holy Ghost will give the faith as well as remove the mountains. One cannot but be struck with the similarity of this passage to our Saviour's wonderful teaching regarding faith, where He says, that if we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, we shall say to the mountain, "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea"; it shall be done.

Faith does not ask the mountain to be removed. Faith does not even climb the mountain; but it simply commands it to disappear, and uses the authority and power of God. This is the way the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of those who trust and obey Him and are led by the Spirit of God.

2. The work of the Holy Ghost gives all the glory to God. "He shall bring forth the headstone with shouting, crying Grace, grace unto it!"

Man's work reflects its honor upon man; but when we become possessed of God, and recognize His all-sufficiency, we can speak of His work without consciousness of ourselves, and say with the apostle, "Not I, but the grace of Christ in me."

3. The work of the Holy Ghost is a finished work. He does not leave the broken column and the unroofed walls; but He accomplishes His purpose, and He leads us to see our expectation and finish our work. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands also shall finish it, and "Thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you."

The work of human ambition and impulse is weak, unstable, and spasmodic; but the work that God inspires is carried through.

4. The work of the Holy Ghost is straight work, and perfectly plumb. "They shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel." The plummet is the symbol of righteousness. A plumb wall is a straight wall, a perpendicular wall; and so the work that God has is a straight work, pure work, and right work. The work that He inspires and carries forward has no compromises about it, and does not need to try to please men; but it rises on Scriptural foundations, and its walls are righteousness, and its gates, praise.

5. Finally, the work of the Holy Ghost is accomplished through feeble instrumentalities. "Who hath despised the day of small things?" This is the way it begins. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and the things which are not, to

bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence."

I never read this text without remembering a cold November afternoon, in the year 1881, when a little company of seven persons met in an upper room in this city to confer and pray about giving the Gospel in its fullness to the neglected and churchless people of this great city. We were all poor, and there were but a few of us at that. We had come together in answer to a public call for a meeting of all who were interested in this subject.

As we sat down in the cheerless hall and gathered round the fire to keep ourselves from freezing, we looked at each other; and, certainly, it was the day of small things. Then we asked God to speak to us. As we opened our Bible that afternoon, the leaves parted at the fourth chapter of Zechariah, and, without thinking, our eye feel on this very verse, "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . For who hath despised the day of small things?"

Never, perhaps, did a message come to human hearts with more strange and thrilling power than that message that afternoon. Kneeling down together, we let God pray His own prayer in our hearts; and the years that have followed have brought the blessed answer.

Do not be afraid of small beginnings. We may well fear large and pretentious resources, but God added to seven ciphers will amount to millions every time.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LAST MESSAGE OF THE HOLY GHOST TO THE OLD DISPENSATION.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."—Mal. 3: 2, 3.

THE Book of Malachi contains the last message of the Holy Ghost to the old dispensation. It was his high honor to close the prophetic scroll 2,300 years ago, before the silence of 400 years, which was to he broken once more, when "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets," should at length speak unto us by His Son.

While he is recognized as one of the prophets of the Restoration, strictly speaking, he came just after the Restoration had been accomplished, so far, at least, as the ecclesiastical and political reorganization of the nation was concerned; and his part was rather to be the spiritual reformer of his times, and to rouse his countrymen from the reaction into which their religious life was falling, and summon them to righteousness and faithfulness to God.

His name signifies "My messenger," and he was indeed the mouthpiece and the messenger of the Holy Ghost to his own age and to ours also, in the very special sense in which these times were typical of our own.

The closing years of the Old Testament dispensation might, very naturally, be expected to correspond to the

closing years of the New Testament age. The state of the people in Malachi's day bore a striking correspondence to the age we live in, and his messages to his own generation have a solemn significance to us "on whom the ends of the world are come."

I.

MALACHI'S MESSAGES TO HIS OWN TIMES.

The Restoration had been followed by a period of prosperity, and, as usually happens, this had brought spiritual declension and, indeed, a very mournful condition of a religious life.

The moral condition of the people was indicated, as is usually the case, by the prevalence of divorce and the decay of domestic and social purity and righteouness. The wives of their youth were put away without cause, "the daughters of a strange god" were taken into unholy alliances, and the altar of Jehovah was "covered with tears." This was done, not only by the people, but the very priests were foremost in this laxity of morals. Malachi was sent to rebuke their wickedness and to tell them that God hated their "putting away" and their unholy lives, and to call them swiftly and solemnly to righteousness and repentance. Then, along with this, there had grown up a spirit of mercenary selfishness. The very service of the sanctuary had become tainted with it so that the priesthood was a self-interested profession. No man would even shut the doors of the temple without a salary. The old spirit of sacrifice, love, and disinterested devotion was dead; and a lot of time-serving parasites had sprung up, and begun to use the very house of God for their selfish aggrandizement and gain.

Growing out of this mercenary spirit on the part of the priesthood there was on the part of the people corresponding selfishness and stinginess. They with-

held the tithes and even tried to cheat the Lord by unworthy and dishonest offerings. "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted Thee?.....And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? . . . Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do you kindle a fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. . . . Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this out of your hand? saith the Lord." "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Thus Malachi spoke to the last generation of the Old Testament, and thus he might speak with equal fitness to the last generation of the Christian age. There is the same laxity of morals, the same obliteration of God's sharp distinctions, the same breaking down of the sanctities of home, the same avarice and love of money, the same mercenary spirit in the very work of God with its hired preachers, hired choirs, hired prayers. The very pulpit is an arena for intellectual gymnasts and a field for ministerial ambition. There is the same worldliness and niggardliness in the Church of God, with millions for our luxuries and pleasures, but pittances for God; splendid frescoed ceilings and costly spires, pointing in proud profession to heaven, but less

per head from the people of God to send the Gospel to the world than we pay for our table salt or the egg shell in our coffee. Is not this as truly the portrait of our times, as it was of the days of Malachi? And is not this the same picture which the Holy Ghost in the New Testament has left, as of the last days of the present dispensation: "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof."

Already these times have begun to come, and the messages of Malachi and Paul speak to the compromising Christians of today with a terrible aptness and fidelity. It would, indeed, seem as if the professed followers of God in every dispensation had to be tried and found wanting. Adam first failed in Eden; then the Antediluvian age went out in judgment. The patriarchal family sank into Egyptian slavery. The conquest of Canaan ended in the long captivity of the Judges. The kingdom of David terminated in the fall of Israel and the captivity of Judah. And now the glorious Restoration under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah had fallen back into the worldliness and ungodliness of Malachi's day. Even so shall it be with the closing days of the Christian dispensation. As the pure church of Paul and John became the apostasy of Romanism, even so the church of the Reformation is yet to develop into the Laodicea of the last days; and the signs of Laodicea are not so far to seek already in the spirit of our own times.

But in the days of Malachi there was a faithful remnant, a little Church within the Church, a band of whom the prophet could say: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be

mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."

And so in our own days there is still "the little flock," the church of Philadelphia side by side with Laodicea, waiting for the coming of the Lord. There is a larger remnant than we dream in every dark and sinful generation who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. There is today in every church of Christ on earth the strange spectacle of a great, broad mass of professing Christians who know or want to know little of the power of the Holy Ghost, and, within that wider circle, a hidden few, like Enoch, who are walking with God, who are filled with the Holy Ghost, who are watching for the coming of the Lord, and who are the preserving salt of the whole body and the real impelling force of all the Christian activities of the entire church of Christ today.

Thus the age of Malachi touches our own with a wonderful correspondence, and the closing messages of the Old Testament ring like a trumpet call to the last age of the New Testament church. Let us receive their solemn warnings. Let us rejoice in their bright and blessed promises. Let us be found among the little remnant of holy and waiting ones.

II.

THE SPECIAL PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT IN MALACHI.

There are two special promises in this prophetic book. The first is the coming of John the Baptist. "Behold, I will send my messenger, who shall prepare the way before me." The second is the coming of the Lord Himself in His first advent. "And the Lord, whom

ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." This, of course, has reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in His incarnation and earthly ministry. But the promise immediately unfolds into a fullness of meaning which takes in also the ministry of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, the ministry of Christ and of the Holy Ghost are here so linked together that it is impossible to tell where one begins and the other ends. "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Then, later, there comes a third promise in the next chapter, of the other day that is coming, the other fire that is to consume and burn to ashes all the dross which the fire of the Holy Ghost has not burned away. This, of course, is the day of the Lord's second coming, to be preceded by the ministry of Elijah in some sense, and to bring to Israel's returning sons the rising of the Sun of Righteousness and to the waiting saints of God the day of millennial glory.

It is especially to the second of these promises that our subject holds us, the promise of the Holy Ghost.

1. It is, as we have seen, connected directly with the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Himself. It is spoken of as if it were all Christ's own work. But we know who it was that brought the refiner's fire and the fullers' soap, the blessed Holy Ghost. Yet it is Christ who "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost"; and when He comes it is Christ He brings, so that it is the one life, the one work, through the two persons of the one God.

2. The work He comes to do is to cleanse and purify. He is the Spirit of holiness. But there are two stages of holiness suggested. The first is cleansing from sin; the second is refining the gold and bringing it to a higher measure of purity and beauty. The Spirit comes to do both these works in the believer's heart. It is one thing to be cleansed from all known sin, but it is quite another to be refined, polished, and transformed into all the fullness of all the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. There is a good, but there is also an acceptable; and then there is the perfect will of God, and the Spirit is longing to bring us up to the highest. The wedding robe of the Bride of the Lamb is represented as not only clean, but bright; that is, glorious and beautiful, like Christ's own transfiguration robes. Iron can be refined until it is more precious than gold. So our hearts can be not only purified but glorified, even here.

3. Corresponding to this double work is the double figure, the refiner's fire and the fullers' soap. The soap is for outward cleansing, the fire is for inward and intrinsic transformation. Fire can penetrate where water cannot reach, and can be used where water and soap are of no avail. Fire can be used to cleanse only that which in its nature is indestructible. The silver and the gold can stand the fire, because they are incombustible. The more you burn them the more you improve them. So the fire of the Holy Ghost can come to us only when we become united with God, and partakers of His divine nature. Then we do not fear the fire. It cannot hurt, but only refines. Beloved, some of us have only passed through soap and water. God wants our garments fire-touched. Then "the King's daughter" shall be "all glorious within, her clothing of wrought gold," which no flame can deface or destroy.

4. "He shall sit." This is very striking. He does not hurry His work; that is, the work of the fire, the

deeper, intenser inworking of the Holy Ghost. There is a baptism of the Spirit, a receiving of the Spirit, a cleansing work of the Spirit which is instantaneous and complete. But there is a later work, the following up, the filling out, the burning in of the Refiner which must take time. God is willing to take the time. Let us be, too. The figure suggests the most thoughtful care. He sits down at the crucible. He does not for a moment leave His precious work. He does not let the fire get too hot, or burn too long. And the moment He can see His face on the molten gold, He knows the work is complete, and the fire is withdrawn. It is a great thing to understand rightly the immediate and instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit in converting the soul, and then in entering it and taking up His eternal dwelling there through our obedience and faith, as our Sanctifier and Keeper; and His more gradual and subsequent work, in developing and filling our spiritual capacity, searching and enlarging us, and leading us on and out and up into all the fullness of the mature manhood of Christ.

How wonderful, how gracious, how kind that He will take such trouble with us, and, with love that will not tire, work out in us to the end "all the good pleasure of His goodness," and make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ to whom be glory, both now and forever. Amen. Oh, that we might let Him have right of way, and ever cry,

> "Refining fire go through my heart,
> Illuminate my soul;
> Scatter Thy life in every part,
> And purify the whole."

5. Finally, all this is for service. "He will purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto Him an offering in righteousness." This is God's great end in all

His work of grace. He will not give us the Holy Ghost to terminate upon ourselves; and if He sees that our object in seeking even spiritual blessing and power is our own delight, aggrandizement, or self-importance, we shall be disappointed. But if our purpose is to be like God Himself, channels of blessing to others, and instruments for His use, He will fill us and use us to the fullest measure of our heart's desire. The more we give the more we shall receive, until, like God, our only occupation will be to be a blessing. This is the secret of barren hearts and lifeless churches. They are Dead Seas, that have received without an outlet, until they could hold no more, until even what they had has become a stagnant and unwholesome pool.

Side by side, the blessing and service must ever go hand in hand, according to the ancient promise, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me."

The Old Testament closes with the glorious promise of the Holy Ghost. How wonderfully the New Testament has fulfilled it! Let our lives fulfill it. Let our words and works pass it on until the yet greater promise of His Second Coming shall come to pass, and we shall rise to a richer indwelling of the Holy Ghost and a nobler service in the ages to come than we have ever here been able to ask or think.

We have closed these unfoldings of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. We shall next turn, if the Lord will, to the fuller light of the New Testament midday and the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Oh, if, amid the imperfect light of that ancient dispensation, the Spirit accomplished such glorious results and left such illustrious examples of His grace and power, how much more must He not expect of us, the children of the morning, and the heirs of all His truth and grace! God help us to be worthy of our inheritance and true to our trust.

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